

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

"We cannot admit the right of the British to mutilate our country, either in its own interest or at the call of any section of our population. We do not contemplate the use of force. If your Government stands aside, we can effect a complete reconciliation."

- - DE VALERA (to Lloyd George, 1918)

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

BY

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C O N T E N T S

				PAGE
PREFACE	i
PROLOGUE	1
A HATE LYRIC	4
THE NEW AVATAR	9
INTRASIGENCE INCARNATE	17
“WHAT’S THE QUARREL ABOUT?”	...	...	...	28
“JINNUINE” AUCTION	...	...	...	37
“JINNASTICS”	...	...	...	51
THE LAST EFFORT	...	...	...	56
THE CROWNING FOLLY	...	...	...	65
COMMUNAL ELECTORATES	...	...	...	71
THE APPLE OF DISCORD	...	...	...	77
WILFUL SABOTAGE	...	...	...	88
THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE	...	...	...	93
JINNAH’S BEANSTALK	...	...	...	107
SOWING THE WIND	...	...	...	114
THE EAST WIND	...	...	...	123
LINCOLN’S CHOICE	...	...	...	132
BEST OF BOTH WORLDS	...	...	...	137
EPILOGUE: LEAGUE CANUTE	...	...	...	147

P R E F A C E

THIS book is written more in pain than in anger. This is a protest not against the existence of different viewpoints in the politics of India; but against the methods employed by one political party, the Muslim League, in achieving its objective—and not against the objective itself, if that objective be the protection and promotion of the legitimate interests of the Muslim community. For, the writer grants they have a case, and they have every right to present it as best they can—but as fairly they must.

As enlightened and intellectual men, we may accept that truth has two sides to it. We would grant that the Muslim League has genuine and honest grievances against the majority Hindu community.

But our sense of decency and decorum is galled at the importation of the Nazi technique in Indian politics ; the preference of political hatred to political disagreement, based on the Nazi principle that hatred is better ammunition than mere dislike ; the dangerous tendency to overdo the hyperbole in the advocacy of one's political viewpoint.

Perhaps it is a truism to say that people get the leaders they deserve. But it is equally true that the people (or their destinies) are what their leaders make of them ; that people are just pliant clay in the hands of leaders to be moulded and fashioned according to their whims and fancies. Therefore, the leaders are directly responsible for the conduct and fate of their people.

History alone can give the final verdict as to whether they were rightly or wrongly led ; but their present conduct and methods are an open book for anybody with eyes to see and read. Even as a general is responsible for the conduct of his army in war, in politics the leadership that lays down policy, programme and rules of conduct must be and is responsible for the people's conduct.

P R E F A C E

All patriotic Indians have watched with anxiety, pain and torment of the soul the Muslim League leadership wilfully and deliberately leading its flock along the separatist and disruptionist track, ruthlessly uprooting all strands of common sentiment and feeling and patriotism laboriously woven through a thousand years.

In voicing this protest, the writer realises the painful necessity of calling a spade a spade. It is the writer's honest belief that we have too long applied the Nelson's blind eye to unpleasant facts and events, simply because they are unpleasant and we hate to acknowledge them as such. This has led to clouding of issues and a general confusion in the minds of the people.

The writer, however, realises that the mere debunking of Pakistan is not enough—let us not lose the correct perspective. Removing the obstructions placed from time to time on India's road to freedom is the objective. Pakistan is just one—and the latest and most formidable obstruction on that road. Therefore this book does not stop at exposing the hollowness of the claim of Pakistan and its dangerous implications. It makes an humble attempt to negotiate India's freedom passage over this obstruction.

At the least, it is the author's hope that this book will be a contribution to that very necessary literature on the vexed problem of communal disagreement, which should engage every Indian's attention at the present moment.

D. G. K.

Nasik,
May, 25th 1944.

1. PROLOGUE:

*O England ! model to thy inward greatness
Like little body with a mighty heart
What mightst thou do that honour would thee do,
Were all thy children kind and natural !*

In a fit of embittered patriotism, Shakespeare burst out in the foregoing verse. These lines have haunted me as I have reflected on the potential greatness, strength and power of this country of ours, if, if only all her children "were kind and natural"—this vast country, with its rich and diverse natural resources ; its great manpower comprising one-fifth of the human race ; its brainpower ; its intellectual attainments and its heritage of a rich culture and ancient civilisation ; its great contribution to the world's treasure of art, literature, philosophy and science to this day.

I belong to a generation which politically opened their eyes on the inspiring and magnificent spectacle of Hindus and Muslims marching arm in arm demonstrating to the world the determination of united India to be free—the 1919-21 Congress-Khilafat movement. I was hardly ten then. I was thrilled as I watched the mammoth nationalist demonstrations and upsurge in Bombay, when both Hindus and Muslims equally shared—and considered it a privilege to share—the joys and sufferings in the struggle for India's freedom.

I remember the memorable afternoon at Elphinstone Road maidan when the greatest bonfire of foreign cloth was lighted by Mahatma Gandhi—and also remember, too well, how the vast sea of humanity burst the dykes of the splendid volunteer cordons and flooded pell-mell over the maidan, and how I along with other boys almost got

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

trampled upon by the surging crowds who involuntarily pressed forward to catch a glimpse and a few words of the feeble voice of Mahatma Gandhi, speaking seated on a table—then he still wore a Gandhi cap and a *kurta* and *dhoti*.

Then again, I remember the day when I joined a long procession of students of the Tilak Mahavidyalaya, which, in pouring rain and drenched to the skin, walked all the way to the residence of the venerable mother of the Ali Brothers to congratulate her on the arrest of her illustrious sons.

Those were happy days—days when Mahatma Gandhi still proudly claimed to have the Ali Brothers in his pocket and the burly Brothers affectionately snuggled into it ; when Mr. Jinnah was still a nationalist and champion and symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity—when Hindu artists dared include the Ali Brothers and other Muslim leaders in their nationalist pantheon—when paintings and pictures were freely displayed with—I remember one particularly—the Ali Brothers depicted as Bhima and Arjuna and Mahatma Gandhi as Sri Krishna of the Mahabharata. Then, the worship of ‘Hind Mata’ was not, yet, sinful idolatry and the national flag a sacrilegious symbol, and Hindus and Muslims sang in chorus and with fervour the ‘Vande Mataram.’

In short, then, Indian politics were still young, when politics in India had only one motive force—the country’s freedom—when “Power Politics” were unknown and “party politics” were unheard of.

Then, all that we knew and saw was the happy picture of Hindu-Muslim unity and harmony . . . blessed are the innocent, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven !

Recalling those glorious days, Mahatma Gandhi, in his epic address to the last A. I. C. C. meeting in August 1942, said longingly : “It was the spirit of courtesy, dignity and nobility that inspired us in those days. Members of each community vied with one another in accommodating members of the sister communities. They respected one

HAPPY DAYS

another's religious feelings, and considered it a privilege to do so. Not a trace of suspicion lurked in anybody's heart. Where has all that dignity—that nobility of spirit—disappeared now? I should ask all Mussalmans, including the Qaid-e-azam, to recall those glorious days and to find out what has brought us to the present *impasse*. The Qaid-e-azam, was at one time a Congressman. If today the Congress has incurred his wrath, it is because the canker of suspicion has entered his heart."

No other generation could have watched with greater pain and sense of frustration than mine the heart-breaking spectacle of progressive and continuous deterioration of Hindu-Muslim relations since then.

As we grew up so did we become more and more alive to the yawning chasm between the two communities ; and today we have lived to see the day when one man's freedom is claimed to be another's bondage ; when communal riots have become a matter of common occurrence, as inevitable as the floods or the periodic visitations of epidemics ; when a note of despair and bitterness has crept into Indian nationalism ; when the Muslim League's main goal and objective has, to all intents and purposes, become fighting the Congress ; when the Muslims are being prepared to cut up their motherland to pieces ; when every step taken forward by nationalism is branded as an attempt to enslave the Muslims with a Hindu raj ; when, in fact, the Muslim League has become a greater and more formidable obstacle to the country's freedom than even British imperialism.

To us of this generation, more than any other, this fall has been too personal, too tragic for words. We have watched with trepidation and torment of the soul every stage thereof—and also the dogged, herculean efforts made by the Congress to avert the calamity of communal antagonism—but alas, in vain.

2.

A HATE LYRIC

“I NEVER knew we were so badly off,” said my Muslim lawyer friend. There was a vengeful earnestness in his voice. I sympathetically nodded—I would not, could not say anything, for my mouth was full of *chapati* rolled in that famous, tasty Sholapur mutton roast.

We were having a late supper together after listening to a spate of speeches from the Muslim League platform. The occasion was the Bombay Provincial Muslim League Conference, and the place and time, Sholapur, June, 1939.

There was a note of embarrassment in my Muslim friend’s attitude, which seemed to say “the present company is excepted—I don’t mean you!” He was my host of the moment. And as if to remove any misimpression, he was extremely solicitous and tender to me, and generally regretted that things should be in such a state. I was moved at his sincere embarrassment and honest friendliness towards me, and preferred to talk of the weather—which was beastly hot in Sholapur June and on which opinion we both heartily and with gusto agreed.

His mental conflict—a vague consciousness of the contrast between fact and fiction, between reality and propaganda—represents the average mind of an educated Muslim, who is embarrassed when individually confronted with the horrifying unreality of propaganda.

However, my Muslim friend’s remarks—“I never knew we were so badly off”—were at once a tribute to the effectiveness of League propaganda and an unconscious comment on its content.

Twenty thousand Muslims had trekked many miles from the countryside to the city to attend that conference, as they would to a fair, in their Sunday best and in great spirits.

The star performers of the evening were Sir Sikandar

A HATE LYRIC

Hyat Khan, who presided over the conference and Qaid-e-azam Mohmad Ali Jinnah. The former spoke in a high-flown Punjabi Urdu, and the latter's was the inimitable, fighting, debating eloquence in English. The lesser speakers either spoke in English, Urdu or the local Sholapur variety of Hindustani—which is a quaint mule “out of Marathi and by Urdu.” For the most part, these speeches in alien tongue went over the heads of the audience, which was essentially Marathi-speaking—and thank God, they did, for most of them were just high inflammable material, which has to be kept at a safe distance from the tinder of mass mind.

But the thirty thousand people made up for it by full-throated and long-drawn cheering of the leaders and singing in chorus the string of slogans opening with “Qaid-e-azam zindabad”, “Congress murdabad” and “Muslim League zindabad” and down to the “zindabad” for the local gauleiter.

In June, 1939, Pakistan had not yet been officially adopted as the League's political goal and objective. Then, still, the League was too busy painting the Congress black, while Pakistan only formed a diversion in speeches.

Mr. Jinnah had for the text of his speech “Congress Tyranny.” With choice invective and stinging sarcasm he charged the Congress with varied sins of omission and commission. He beat the Congress, hip and thigh, discrediting that institution, to his own satisfaction, on all fronts. He said to the Muslims : “Congress promised you equality and equity, and gave you Hindu Raj and oppression.” He turned to the workers and peasants, and said, “Congress promised you bread, they gave you stones.” He turned to capitalists and landlords and proved to his heart's content how they had been stabbed in the back by the Congress. He addressed the youth of the country: “Congress promised you Swaraj and they gave you slavery.” He did not spare the Hindus of gratuitous advice, whom he told: “Don't you trust the Congress. They are deceiving and fooling you!”

There was a haunting similarity between this speech

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

and Hitler's early speeches during the Munich beer-hall days, when "national socialism" was presented to a discontented and embittered people as all things to all men. In those days, when he was still laboriously building up his party, Hitler had a carrot to dangle before every section and interest...of German society. To the nationalists his programme was undiluted nationalism ; to the socialists it was socialism ; to the capitalist, he posed as his champion and saviour against the Bolshie meance—only he had nothing to give to the wretched Jew except pogroms.

Four years ago Pakistan was still a cloud as small as one's hand ; still a ugly vague idea, useful only as a stick to beat the Congress with. When later the sinister outline of Pakistan was visible to the eye and the mind, many a stout Muslim patriot was scared away from it.

Then, four years ago, Muslims in the Hindu-majority provinces like Bombay had yet to be convinced of the efficacy and virtue of Pakistan to save them from "Hindu majority tyranny and oppression." The subject of Pakistan had to be gently broached to the Muslims here. Hating the Congress is something concrete which they could understand as they had been presented with instances of "Congress atrocities." But how a Muslim independent state in Muslim-majority provinces could safeguard the interests of Muslim minorities in the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, Bombay and Madras was still difficult for them to see.

Hence the Sher-e-Punjab, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, brought down all the way from the North to preside over the conference, endeavoured to address himself to this ticklish subject. And the Lion of the Punjab chivalrously offered : "We, the Sword Arm of India, are there to protect you and keep a jealous eye over you. Your sufferings are ours. Whenever you are in difficulties, we will come to your help."

The idea of the Sword Arm of India rushing to their rescue appealed to the romantic imagination of the audience whose "patriotism" had by now been roused to

A HATE LYRIC

fever pitch, and the offer was greeted with frenzied and hysterical cheers.

The proceedings of the conference itself were one glorious hymn of hate—resolutions condemned this and denounced that act of the Congress ; amateur poets sang inflammatory songs specially composed for the occasion, dripping with communal venom. Speakers, one after the other, delivered themselves of tirades against the Congress, whatever the subject of the resolution on which they were supposed to speak.

Almost every resolution began with the words “ We condemn . . . ” or their equivalents. There was, however, one constructive-looking resolution—I noted with relief—the one that urged the Muslims to take to Swadeshi—but it was “ Muslim-made ” Swadeshi they were exhorted to wear !

Oh, for an inch of exclusively “ Muslim-made ” cloth in this machine age of mass production !

I listened with anguish and pain to the full-throated oratory, sowing and watering hatred of the Hindu in the fanatical Muslim breast. And, as I listened, I could not help reflecting on the reactions on the mind of the simple illiterate but fanatical Muslim worker—and shuddered at the thought.

When tomorrow the dust of the conference *tamasha* would die down, I mused, and the great leaders, disperse to their distant cities, the Muslim worker would go back to his mill or farm and rub shoulders with his Hindu brother, and serve, perhaps, the same common Hindu master. Would he still nurse hatred for his workmate and neighbour? If he did, God save him and his neighbour ! After all, whether he likes it or not, he and his Hindu mate have to live side by side, serve a common master, and buy his grocery from the same Hindu bania. And suppose his Hindu environment reciprocated the hatred—then, what would be the plight of the poor Muslim worker ?

Remember, the majority of the Muslims belong to the working class, depending, very often, on Hindu masters

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

for their sustenance. Have the Jinnahs ever given a thought to the economic helplessness of the majority of their blind followers ?

I returned from Sholapur with a sickening intellectual disgust and a morbid conviction that India must have to wade through communal blood before reaching her political goal . . . that civil war was, perhaps, inevitable for India . . .

Hardly two months passed, there was a bloody communal riot in Sholapur . . . but the Jinnahs were far away from the scene, comfortably lounging in their villas in Bombay, Lahore and Ahmedabad.

3. THE NEW AVATAR

MR. MOHMAD ALI JINNAH is nothing if he is not a political strategist. To a strategist the end is the only justification of the means. Mr. Jinnah's end is making the Muslim League, his Muslim League, strong, powerful and supreme in the country, and any means are good enough to achieve that end.

Mr. Jinnah has assessed the strength of the League *vis-a-vis* the Government on the one hand and the Congress on the other. And while the sun of Government patronage shines, he will make hay—and stack it up for the rainy day. For, Mr. Jinnah has no illusions about the Government's motives in extending its patronage to the Muslim League.

In his presidential speech at Delhi, in April, 1943, Mr. Jinnah was outspoken on this matter. He declared, "The British said—and mind you, I don't take everything they say to be correct—they said: 'in resisting the Congress, we are really protecting you and safeguarding your interests, because if we were to surrender to the demands of the Congress, it would be at your risk and sacrifice.' But the Mussalmans say: 'We don't believe that you love us so much.' We know it suits them and they are taking the fullest advantage of the situation, because if there is any agreement between the Hindus and the Muslims, then they know the net result of that would be parting with Power."

But while it lasts, Mr. Jinnah knows he can afford to be militant and blackmail with impunity the Congress as well as the Government. And with the ransom collected, he is determined to build a mansion for the League.

"Be always the same lovely lady, my love, be always the same yielding dove—and I will make you my wife and queen, and I will give you Pakistan; why, I will give you the beautiful moon for a diadem for your tiara of pearls,"

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

breathlessly whispers the passionate lover, in half-dream and dizzy, as he hungrily bends over his lady-love.

But the ‘lovely lady’, now fully conscious of the power she exercises over the ‘passionate lover’, and with all her native cunning and wiles, presents a bored, frigid expression to the tormented lover, while inwardly chuckling at the satisfactory state of affairs.

Mr. Jinnah is out to cash the “nuptial bed” promises of British imperialism.

But who is exploiting whom? There is a slight difference of opinion on the subject! Government honestly believes it is playing the ancient Roman game of *Divide et impera* with ingenuity and skill and exploiting the League successfully for its own purpose.

One thing, however, is pretty clear: while both are exploiting each other with success, the Government has indeed scored first and best—it has achieved its immediate objective—it has raised a great China Wall—aided and abetted by the Muslim League—against which Indian Nationalism is beating its head with a view to ram it and clear the road to freedom.

But what is most annoying and irritating to the Government is that, while eluding any settlement with the Congress, Mr. Jinnah has tenaciously, even insolently refused to sign on the dotted line for the Government, except on his own terms. For, to Mr. Jinnah it is a partnership of convenience. With the Government his tactics have been a judicious mixture of threats, cajolery, political bribe and blackmail.

But his ruthless tactics have proved him a most untrustworthy ally. This is one reason why Muslims of the Aga Khani political school disapprove of Mr. Jinnah’s methods and hold aloof from his League—when they held the field, they faithfully and loyally carried out their part of the contract with the government, and trusted in God and “Ma-Bap” Government for the fruits of their labours to roll in!

That the League should bite the hand that fed it in

THE NEW AVATAR

the past and in the present, is a matter for sorrow and righteous indignation to Government ; it is the unkindest cut of all.

Meantime, tactical, strategic, rhetorical and debating victories are all Mr. Jinnah's. He has held the pass against both the Congress and the Government and held them both in ransom.

The pettiest points are not too petty for Mr. Jinnah to score over the Congress. Long-range battery duels with the Congress have been his sport and pastime. His "Big Berthas" have, from time to time, hurled arrogant threats and thundering resolutions at the Congress. But like the people of Dover, the Congress by now has found out that they do not much harm, and the Congress could go about its job "as usual".

In 1940, the Congress announced its intention to launch individual civil disobedience movement. Immediately, Mr. Jinnah held out the threat to the Congress : "Any move by the Congress to widen political power without the League's approval will meet with the League's resistance." He characterised the movement as an "attempt to coerce the British Government to bend to Congress demands over the heads and at the cost of the Muslims."

The Congress, however, went ahead with its civil disobedience. Nothing particularly happened !

Once again, when in August, 1942, the Congress decided to launch a mass struggle, Mr. Jinnah threatened the Congress and the country with dire consequences. He called the Congress move "a pistol aimed at our head," and pompously warned it : "We can give a hundred times more trouble." Undisturbed, the Congress plunged into the struggle—and the conduct of the Muslim masses in general was exemplary—no other year in recent times has been freer of communal riots than the year 1942-43—except for communal tension arising out of a students' dispute in Dacca in February 1943. The Muslim masses reacted most sympathetically to the sufferings of Congressmen.

Mr. Jinnah tried the same pyrotechnical weapon of

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

arrogant threats on the Government, but it recocheted against that inanimate, steel armour—and the result was almost comic. Witness the flamboyant statement of Mr. Jinnah's : "If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr. Gandhi from writing direct to me ? He is writing letters to the Viceroy. Why does he not write to me direct ? Who is there that can prevent him from doing so ?.....I cannot believe for a single moment—strong as this Government may be in this country—I cannot believe that they will have the daring to stop such a letter if it is sent to me."*

Mahatma Gandhi, in the Aga Khan Palace in Poona, took the hint and immediately addressed a letter to Mr. Jinnah ; and the Government did have the "daring to stop such a letter" sent to Mr. Jinnah !

Well, Mr. Jinnah did nothing; but, unabashed, he roundly inveighed at the press for "misreporting" his speech.

Earlier, Mr. Jinnah proposed to the Viceroy the famous "War Contract" deal with the Government. His "Tentative Proposals" demanded fifty per cent share in the Government. The Viceroy's response was almost an anticlimax : he offered the Muslim League two seats out of eleven in the executive council and five out of about twenty in the proposed war advisory council.

But Mr. Jinnah's influence and strength comes into play when Government arbitrates between the League and the Congress on matters of India's constitutional and political progress. It is in this sphere that Mr. Jinnah finds himself in his element—for he knows that Government must and would choose the lesser evil of the two, and follow its traditional policy of favouring the League against the Congress.

In this sphere, Mr. Jinnah may well pride himself at the fact that even the mighty British Government has quailed under his frown and recanted and swallowed its words and humbly bowed to Mr. Jinnah !

In December, 1940, Mr. Leopold Amery, the Secretary

* Mr. Jinnah's presidential address at Delhi session of the League, April, 1948 published as a pamphlet by the Muslim League Printing Press, Daryaganj, Delhi.

THE NEW AVATAR

of State for India, delivered one of the best and most constructive speeches on India. It was a noble performance, which immediately struck a responsive chord in every Indian's heart, and a new, hopeful atmosphere was being created in a country stewing in political frustration.

The text of Mr. Amery's speech was "India First." "By India, I mean India as a whole," he declared, "India as nature and history have shaped her; India with her infinite diversity and underlying unity; India as she is today and as we wish her to be in the years to come . . . history has created in India, inspite of variations in detail, variations everywhere shading insensibly into one another, her own distinctive human life and in a large measure her own distinctive way of life . . . once broken up into separate and independent entities, India would relapse, as it did in the decline of the Moghul Empire, into a welter of contending powers, in which free institutions would be inevitably suppressed and in which no one element would have the resources with which to defend itself against external attack, whether by land or sea."

Mr. Amery, then, put himself in the position of a Hindu, and said, if he were a Hindu, he would ask himself : "Must I not win over to my conception of India's future my Muslim neighbour who is as essentially and necessarily a part of India as I am? Should my preference for the democratic system on the simple majority basis stand in the way of some compromise which would enable him to feel that his community will as surely enjoy in the future as real a freedom and as full a development of his individual, communal and cultural entity as my own."

Then putting himself in the position of a Muslim, Mr. Amery would ask himself : "Bound as I am to assert the right of my own community to be recognised as a permanent element in India's national life and not as a mere numerical minority, am I entitled to put that claim to the point of imposing a veto on all political progress except at the cost of a complete break-up of Indian unity which would be equally disastrous to us both?"

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

It was a noble speech. No Congressman could have put the case for Indian nationalism and political integrity better. The pronouncement, if the spirit of it had continued to inspire the actions of the British Government in India, would have served as the base for moderate and liberal elements in India to rally and arrive at a political settlement. And by that stroke, the British Government would have won over the forces of progress and nationalism in India to active and enthusiastic co-operation in this war against reaction and forces of evil.

For Indian nationalism's sole puzzle has been how to relate their cause to the world cause of progress for which the present war is claimed to be fought. In a word, all that Nationalist India asks for of the British Government is to make it possible for her, consistent with her self-respect and the cause of her freedom, to participate in this war for world freedom and democracy.

But it was not to be. Mr. Amery wilted before Mr. Jinnah's censure, and humbly ate his words and immediately sang a different tune.

This triumph of Mr. Jinnah's equals, in its effect and repercussions, Hitler's triumph at Munich. For it was at Munich that Mr. Neville Chamberlain bowed to Hitler, and gave that evil genius the fatal impression that Britain had for ever lost its gumption and was now a spent up force, and it was that fatal impression that directly encouraged Hitler into plunging the world into the present blood bath.

The Muslim League thundered : The speech is "likely to create grave apprehension in the minds of the Muslims of India as it gives the impression that His Majesty's Government are still contemplating the possibility of a constitution based on the economic and political unity of India." The resolution declared : "It is unfortunate that Mr. Amery should have allowed himself to indulge in slogans such as 'India First'."

Then, the League threatened, "If any concession to the Congress is made which adversely affects or militates against the Muslim demands, it will be resisted by the

THE NEW AVATAR

League with all the power it can command. The League desires to place on record that if the situation demands, it would not hesitate to intervene and play such part in the struggle as may be necessary for the protection of the rights and interests of the Muslims of this country."

The very next day, Mr. Amery rushed to the B. B. C. to demolish the hopes and visions created by the only really constructive speech of his career on India. Mr. Amery now referred to "the pretensions of the Congress party not only to immediate and unconditional independence, but in the name of democracy to override the claim of other important elements in India's complex national life." He also referred to "the great Muslim community of ninety millions in India and to the Indian States." It was to meet that situation, he said, that His Majesty's Government had made it clear that they were prepared to give effect at the earliest possible moment after the war to a new constitution in consonance with Indian conceptions. But, he added, "it must be based on agreement between the main elements in India's national life."

Earlier, Mr. Jinnah achieved three such spectacular, albeit negative, triumphs :—

Scrap the Federal Scheme—demanded the Qaid-e-Azam.

Yes, my lord—replied the British Government humbly.

Let the whole constitutional question be examined *de novo*—shouted the League Fuehrer.

Be it so—answered British Raj dutifully.

No constitution shall be devised without my consent and approval—was the next demand.

It shall be as you say—was Government's faithful response.

That was fine—that was simply grand—and it made Mr. Jinnah dizzy—and he overshot the mark, and demanded : "Give me fifty per cent. share of Power."

Sharing Power ? Well, that is a different proposition ! And the Viceroy immediately put Mr. Jinnah in his place—by offering him less than one-fifth share in his executive council and war advisory council !

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Thus far, but no farther !

To sum up, the British Government has use for the Muslim League only to the extent that it can be exploited and used as a buffer against the mounting tide of Indian nationalism. When, however, the League asks for devolution of power, it receives no "imperial preference"; there, on the other hand, the Government is strictly impartial—would part with power to neither the Congress nor the League !

For Power is the very thing that they are jealously treasuring up—and it is to keep this treasure to themselves that they have use for the League !

"We can only praise your services when you die on the battlefield, and no more." In these words Mr. Jinnah himself pathetically summed up the British attitude towards the League. "Is this an honest attitude?" Mr. Jinnah bitterly complained. "From this attitude can any one believe that there is real, honest desire to transfer power? Times out of number we have made it clear. But we are ignored; our party is ignored because it suits them."*

* Mr. Jinnah's presidential address at Delhi session.

4. INTRANSIGENCE INCARNATE

is the heart-breaking story of the incorrigible intransigence of Mr. Jinnah under his new *avatar*.

This is the story of one who wilfully demolished the bridges and burnt the boats and then demanded of the man on the other bank to come and meet him ; and when the other pleaded his inability to do so, he cursed and abused him and triumphantly turned round and exclaimed : "Did I not tell you ? He does not want to !"

During the last seven years Mr. Jinnah has said and done everything to prevent and obstruct a rapprochement with the Congress, and then with injured innocence complained to the world that the Congress refused to settle with the Muslim League ! He has studiously vitiated and poisoned the atmosphere by his insolence, arrogance and "bull-in-the-China-shop" manners towards his political opponents.

You cannot kick your political opponent into agreeing with you ; you have to woo and argue him into your point of view. But such is Mr. Jinnah's new technique—and those were also the methods adopted by Hitler to build up his party and capture power—and they proved very effective !

No pursued person has displayed greater ingenuity, elusiveness and hostility to the pursuer as Mr. Jinnah has shown in dodging every Congress approach for a settlement.

"My trouble is Mr. Jinnah bangs the door every time I try to open it," observed Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, in his concluding speech at the historic August 1942 session of the All-India Congress Committee. "Five men from our side whom I will get nominated through the Congress Working Committee with full powers and five men from Mr. Jinnah's side will finish off this business within the twinkling of an eye. But who is to respond and respond with reason ?"

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

But why should it be so? The obvious answer that is suggested by Mr. Jinnah's attitude and tactics in the last seven years is that Mr. Jinnah does not want a settlement of the communal question. His political demands—which have changed in content faster than a chameleon changes its shades—are but mere tokens on the political bargaining counter.

He is playing the dangerous game of "power politics"—it is a bid for capture of power—at any cost and at anybody's expense.

Politically and personally, the Congress is the greatest enemy to Mr. Jinnah. The success of the Congress would mean the eclipse of the League and his personal political ambitions. Hence his implacable hostility and bitter war against the Congress. In this war—as in all civil wars—no weapon is too strong or too unfair, no tactics too bad—and, again, the best form of defence is attack!

The vigour and energy with which the League has pursued this war gives one the impression that the sole goal of the League is killing the Congress, rather than the welfare of the Muslim community or even Pakistan.

In this psychology there is no place for a desire to settle with the Congress. And without this fundamental—the honest desire and will to settle a mutual problem for mutual good—no negotiations can be possible or fruitful, as experience has proved.

Any final settlement of the communal problem would "take the bread out of the mouth" of the League—for communalism is the only food on which that institution sustains itself. Even as the Congress must automatically go extinct or go to pieces the moment the common plank of the fight for country's freedom is removed by its achievement, the Muslim League would lose its occupation and function the moment a communal settlement is arrived at.

Even so has been created a vested interest for the League leaders in the perpetuation of the communal "problem." Past experience teaches that whenever there

INTRANSIGENCE INCARNATE

has been a communal understanding and harmony, the Congress swelled in strength and so did the freedom front, while the League's stocks sank low. Recall the 1919-24 years, following the Lucknow Pact, when the two communities jointly fought the Khilafat battle, and the fight for freedom was intensified; and the League gradually lost its importance and justification for existence. So much so that in 1923 the open session of the League had to be abandoned.

The lessons of this experience have not been lost on either the Muslim League or the Government.

Therefore, far from a rapprochement with the Congress, manoeuvring for position as against the Congress has become Mr. Jinnah's main preoccupation. In his anxiety to mobilise all anti-Congress forces in the country, he has exploited the Government's hostility to the Congress to his own purpose without compunction. He has not hesitated to align himself with the most reactionary forces in the country. He carried favour with the Princes by condemning the progressive popular movements in the States (generally inspired by the Congress) and pledged the League to recognition of the rights and privileges of the Princes in the future constitution of India. He went to Madras and gave the League's blessings to the Justice Party's absurd "Dravidastan" scheme.

Mr. Jinnah is reported to have not even spared Muslims of another nation of his disruptionist message and "strongly disapproved of the Chinese Muslims' co-operation with the Hans, as the majority of the Chinese population are sometimes called."*

* John Kin in an article published in the American magazine "Asia" refers to the attitude of Chinese Muslims towards Pakistan and the Indian Muslim League. Kin says in the article : "A written appeal, addressed to Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, President of the Indian Muslim League, urging him to co-operate with the Indian National Congress, was drafted to be signed by General Omar Pai Chungshi, China's No. 1 Mohammedan general and Deputy Chief of Staff of the Chinese Army, in his capacity as President of the Chinese Islamic Salvation Federation, representing all the Chinese Muslims."

Then Kin refers to the Chinese goodwill mission brought to India by Mr. Othman K H Woo in 1941. He writes, Mr. Woo's "mission in India, however, was merely to inform the Muslims there of the activities of their Chinese co-religionists and to gather information on the spot about Muslims in India In an interview, he (Mr. Woo) reported back to Chungking, the President of the Indian Muslim League was quoted as having strongly disapproved of the Chinese Muslims' co-operation with the Hans, as the majority of the Chinese population are sometimes called."

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Then, the Qaid-e-azam took on himself the champion-ship of all the minorities of India and claimed to be their spokesman and guardian. And who were these minorities that the League Fuehrer would protect ? They were not only the religious and racial minorities like the Sikhs, Parsis, Indian Christians and Anglo-Indians, but the social, economic and political minorities like the zamindars, the depressed classes, non-Brahmins, even non-Congress Hindu groups in the legislatures. He forgot his own slogan "Hands off the Muslim community " and made inroads into the Hindu community and waxed eloquent on the "high caste Brahmin tyranny " and shed tears for "the poor, oppressed untouchables." He would feign protect Hindu Mahasabhaites from "Congress majority tyranny!"

But in 1939, Mr. Jinnah suddenly jettisoned the "poor oppressed" minorities and put forth the League's claim for fifty-fifty share of power between "Muslim India" and "Non-Muslim India!"

The other minorities drew their lesson from this event, and preferred to trust to their own wisdom their community's destinies and aligned themselves with Indian nationalism. The Indian Christains, through the speeches of their leaders and resolutions at their annual conferences, swore by nationalism and India's national integrity. Even Anglo-Indians, through their accredited leader Mr. Frank Anthony, have cheerfully agreed to subordinate the interests of their community to those of the Indian nation as a whole.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the leader of the Depressed Classes, who had hoped for a mutually profitable alliance with Mr. Jinnah, was livid with rage at this treachery, and swore that henceforth he would trust none in politics. The learned doctor characterised Mr. Jinnah's demand as "extravagant and irresponsible" and burst out :—

"The Muslims in 1929 admitted that other minorities required protection and that they must have it in the same manner as the Muslims. The only distinction made between the Muslims and other minorities was as to the extent of protection. The Muslims claimed a higher degree

INTRANSIGENCE INCARNATE

of protection than was conceded to other minorities on the ground of their political importance. But as to the necessity and adequacy of protection for other minorities, the Muslims never denied it. But with this new demand for fifty per cent, the Muslims are not only seeking to reduce the Hindu majority to a minority, but they are cutting into the political rights of the minorities. The Muslims are now speaking the language of Hitler.. their demand for fifty per cent is nothing but a counterpart of the German claims for *deutschland über alles* and *lebensraum* for themselves, irrespective of what happens to other minorities.”*

The year 1935 saw the conclusion of nearly seven years' labours in the passing of the Government of India Act by British Parliament—and Mr. Jinnah hastened to India, after his four-year stay in London, to “save” his community, which, he found to be “in the greatest danger.” “I made up my mind to come back to India, as I could not do any good from London.”†—and the new *avatar* was born !

The ushering of the new constitution in India was grasped by the Congress as an auspicious opportunity to heal the communal breach. Mr. Jinnah's Fourteen Points—considered the last word on Muslim demands—had almost all been conceded by the Communal Award—and now all parties in India expected that with the protection granted to the Muslim interests on their own terms and to their fullest satisfaction, the Muslims would be in a mood for co-operation with the Congress.

To make the atmosphere for negotiations more congenial and favourable, the Congress party remained neutral in the Central Assembly when the vote was taken on the Communal Award, though it held the Communal Award as unjust and evil. And Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then Congress President, entered into negotiations with Mr. Jinnah. The two leaders arrived at a formula which should have ushered in a new era in Indian politics. But Mr. Jinnah unreasonably insisted on the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha subscribing to the formula. Dr.

* Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, “Thoughts on Pakistan.”

† Mr. M. A. Jinnah's speech at Aligarh University.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Rajendra Prasad tried his best to persuade Mr. Jinnah to be content with the Congress signature to the formula, and promised that the Congress would even fight the Hindu Mahasabha to defend and preserve that formula.

But Mr. Jinnah stubbornly refused to be satisfied. And the formula went to rust.

Then followed the general elections to the Provincial Legislatures under the new constitution. The Congress swept the polls, and the Muslim League was routed. Out of a total of 485 Muslim seats in all provincial legislatures, the League could capture only 108 seats; and the League drew a blank in five out of the eleven provinces; two of which were Muslim-majority provinces, Sind and the North-West Frontier province ; while in the Punjab, the League could just scrape one seat, and in Bengal they got forty seats against seventyseven seats captured by other Muslim groups. Nor, however, did the Congress fare any better in Muslim constituencies.

The Congress again opened negotiations for co-operation with the League. The Congress offered the proposal of a common Congress-League party in the legislatures, with a common policy and programme to ensure joint responsibility and harmony in the government. But the Muslim League rejected the proposal and insisted on retaining separate identity for the League party in the legislatures while yet demanding a share in the ministries.

The Congress then accepted the co-operation of other Muslim individuals and groups to form ministries. The League immediately denounced those Muslims as "unrepresentative of Muslim opinion" and as "traitors," though they were lawfully elected to the legislatures by the unmistakable, exclusively Muslim electorate. And Mr. Jinnah now laid down the amazing dictum : "Muslims in the Congress do not and cannot represent the Mussalmans of India as members of the Congress, they have disabled themselves from representing, or speaking on behalf of, the Muslim community."*

* Mr. Jinnah in a letter to Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, Congress President, on August 2 1938.

INTRASIGENCE INCARNATE

It is of interest and appropriate to recall here that of the six Muslim ministers in the "Hindu" provinces, three were elected on the Congress platform and two were independent members who later joined the Congress party as did some members of other communities also. The same, however, held true of the League. Quite a number of legislators elected independently and quite a few who had actually defeated the League candidates in the election, subsequently joined the League and became its passionate advocates. For example, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, who later turned out an enthusiastic Leaguer for a short while, with a Proja Party ticket defeated Sir Nazimuddin, the League pillar in Bengal.

The sixth Muslim minister in the "Hindu" provinces, though originally elected on the Muslim League platform, resigned his seat from the United Provinces Legislative Assembly, and stood again as a Congress candidate in the bye-election that ensued. He got himself re-elected on the Congress ticket, defeating the League candidate by an overwhelming majority.

The Muslim League now declared relentless war on the Congress. An intensive offensive was launched. Its immediate target was the Congress' Muslim mass contact movement. This attempt of the Congress to woo the Muslim masses with an economic programme and appeal—which in any democratic country would be accepted as legitimate and normal—was branded a crime against the Muslim League.

Mr. Jinnah hung up the notice "Keep off the Muslims." The League Fuehrer now appointed himself the political conscience-keeper of the entire Muslim community. Hereafter Muslims had no right to have any politics but that cooked and served on a plate by their Fuehrer—"I am the State, I am the People!"*

* Mr. Fazlul Huq in a press statement said: "The League atmosphere has been made utterly unislamic and entirely undemocratic by Mr. Jinnah. It is the will of one man that prevails and this one man is more haughty and arrogant than the proudest of the Pharaohs. Whole power of the League is vested in one man who is known as the Qaid-e-azam. Free expression of opinion in the League is utterly stifled. The present All-India Muslim League does not include within its fold various essential sections of the

(Continued on next page)

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Progressive-minded Muslims who had the courage to raise their voice against the new technique of the League, were hounded out of politics—which was facilitated by the vicious system of separate communal electorates—by Nazi methods. They would not be in the League—and they should not be anywhere else !

Having thus sought to quarantine the Muslim community from the refreshing breath of progressive and nationalist politics, the League unloosed a high-pressure campaign of vilification against the Congress. No stick was too bad or too strong to beat the Congress with.

Till now it was an accepted rule of the game of Indian politics that the differences between the Congress and the League were mere political differences on certain specific issues, and nothing more. But hereafter the Congress was an “enemy” with whom there could be no negotiations except on terms of “unconditional surrender!”

Hereafter what is Congressman’s meat is a Muslim’s poison ! What is patriotism to one, is treason to the other! One’s freedom is the other’s bondage ! And the Congress struggle for the country’s freedom is with a view “to coerce the British Government into handing power to the Congress to establish Hindu Raj over the Muslims !”

Thus a Muslim Congressman is a traitor to the Muslim community !

It is out of this terrible crucible that the patriotism and nationalism of a Muslim Congressman is distilled and tested. It is gratifying, indeed, to find that still large numbers of Muslims pass through this test and ordeal, unscathed and triumphant. For, while to a Hindu it is convenient and even fashionable to be a Congressman, for a Muslim to be a Congressman means going through social persecution and so much sacrifice. Theirs is indeed a

(Continued from previous page)

Muslims of India and chief amongst these are the Jamiat-ul-ulama-Hind, who are admittedly the most learned of Muslim divines and who are considered as authorities on Muslim theology and culture, the Mumins, the Ahraar of the Punjab, the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Khaksars and most of the Muslims of Sind and other provinces.”

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of the most learned Muslim theologians living, was deprived of the long-held honour of leading the congregational Idd prayers in Calcutta. His crime was he is a Congressman

INTRANSIGENCE INCARNATE

stouter and intenser patriotism, which has been tested in fire.

And next the League directed its attention to quarantining the Congress.

“Congress is a Hindu body.”

“How?”

“Because majority of Congressmen are Hindus.”

“So what?”

“Well, I have proved it to you. Hindus don’t cease to be Hindus when they become Congressmen. And they are the majority in the Congress ; *ergo*, the Congress can’t but be a Hindu body!”*

This is the sort of casuistry resorted to to prove that the Congress is a Hindu body and seeks to establish a Hindu Raj with the sole end of oppressing the Muslims ! †

You can only grit your teeth in dispair at such perverse mentality.

Petty incidents were exaggerated to concoct a catalogue of “Congress atrocities” by the process of *suggestio falsi* and *suppressio veri*. When the Congress governments embarked on educational reform by initiating the Wardha Education Scheme, it was characterised as an inroad on Muslim culture—though that scheme was approved by the Jamia Milia, an authoritative, recognised Muslim educational institution. The Vidya Mandir scheme of the Central Provinces Government was an attempt to “Hinduise” the Muslims for no other reason than that the two words “vidya mandir” are of Hindu and Sanskrit origin.

When in Bombay, the Congress government levied a house property tax with a view to finance its Prohibition programme, the Muslim League named it a measure

* “The fact is that its (Congress) activities and movements originate from Hinduistic conception. The Congress is very prompt to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti and Tilak Day and so on. Everything of theirs has a Hindu name, Ashrams and Bande Mataram. A national organisation is expected to represent equally the feelings of every class. The galaxy of the leaders is essentially and entirely composed of the Hindus and a few henchmen of theirs. It represents predominantly and overwhelmingly Hinduistic notionsVidya Mandir scheme is evolved on the basis of purely Hinduistic notions. The whole scheme is deliberate move launched in order to strike out the cultural identity of the Muslims.”—Muslim India by Mohammad Noman.

† “Hindus have suddenly fallen in love with democracy because they could dominate over the Muslims.”—Mr. Jinnah in a speech at Bombay, on February 1, 1943.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

specially directed against the Muslim property-owners, whereas Parsis, Hindus and Muslims alike suffered by the measure. The Muslim League organised a mass demonstration in Bombay against the property tax. Not even Prohibition, which should be dear to every faithful follower of Islam, could extract the sympathy of the League.

The Bombay Legislative Assembly passed a legislative measure enjoining joint electorates to the local bodies, but gave the option to the Muslims to retain separate electorates for themselves. Even this innocent and progressive measure was attacked by the League.

The worship of motherland (Bharat Mata) is suddenly discovered to be an exclusively Hindu idolatrous conception repugnant to Islam. The 'Vande Mataram' song is branded as hostile to the Muslims. During the Khilafat Days, Muslims with Hindus revered and worshipped the same 'Bharat Mata' and sang the 'Vande Mataram' with equal fervour. The Congress has already deleted certain stanzas from the song out of respect to Muslim sentiment and objection. The hoisting of the tri-colour flag—which had so far back as 1932 undergone changes in composition to satisfy the sentiments of the Muslims—was made a point of dispute and ugly controversy. The Green in the tri-colour was intended to symbolise the Muslim community of India.

In short, every sentiment held in reverence by Indian nationalism has been studiously assailed by the League.

History was re-read and re-written to suit the book of the League. Common and favourable points in history were glossed over, divergences and differences were stressed. Thus Akbar was pulled down from the pedestal, and Aurangzeb was held up as the model. When on the occasion of the Quarter centenary of the great Moghul Emperor, Mr. Amery paid a tribute to Akbar, Mr. Jinnah severely castigated the Secretary of State for India in these words :

"Mr. Amery has made a discovery of historical nature.

INTRANSIGENCE INCARNATE

He has been studying the pattern of Akbar's government for post-war reconstruction in India. Akbar was concerned with his own autocratic rule with ministers appointed from different nationalities. United India means that as far as people are concerned they have no voice and it is the rulers who rule by manoeuvring. It is that system that the British government seeks to perpetuate in India. The present executive council of the Viceroy is of the same pattern as Akbar's government. Muslims, Hindus, Parsis and Sikhs all nominated by the Viceroy to do his job."

Then again, in the course of his presidential address at the famous Lahore session of the Muslim League, in March, 1940, Mr. Jinnah expounded his amazing doctrine of two nations in the following words :

"The Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs, literature . . . indeed, they belong to two different civilisations, which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their aspects on life and of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, their heroes are different, and have different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other and likewise their victories and defeats overlap."

Under this dictum, the United States of America, Germany, Ireland, even Britain or any other country in the world could never be a nation ! For which country in the world, in the course of its evolution and history, has not had such factors and conflicts ? Has common nationhood been denied to the people of Britain, Germany or the United States ?

Even so did Mr. Jinnah seek, cruelly and wilfully, to tear up, petal by petal, the blossoming flower of Hindu-Muslim common sentiment and culture.

5. "WHAT'S THE QUARREL ABOUT?"

"**W**HAT are we quarrelling about?"—With this question on his lips, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru embarked on an exploration trip into the recesses of Mr. Jinnah's mind.

At the end of four months' intensive and laborious search, however, Pandit Nehru gave up the task in despair.

The years 1938-39 represented one ceaseless endeavour on the part of the Congress to seek a rapprochement with the League. We have already related how the Congress failed to obtain the co-operation of the League in forming ministries with a common programme and policy in 1937.

In October, 1937, the League held its session at Lucknow, at which it adopted independence as its goal. Mr. Jinnah presided over it and delivered a speech which Mahatma Gandhi characterised as a "declaration of war," in a letter which he wrote to Mr. Jinnah immediately after.

This letter opened a correspondence between the two leaders, in which Gandhiji again made an attempt to find a settlement with the League. But at the end of fourteen exchanges, Gandhiji found himself at a dead end, when Mr. Jinnah declined to see him except as the representative of the Hindu community speaking to Mr. Jinnah as the sole representative of the Muslim community of India.

In his first letter, Gandhiji wrote, "Only, I had hoped you would reserve poor me as a bridge between the two (communities). I see that you want no bridge. I am sorry. It takes two to make a quarrel. You won't find me one, even if I cannot become a peace-maker."

Mr. Jinnah replied : "I am sorry, you think my speech a declaration of war. It is purely in self-defence."

On February 3, 1938, Gandhiji wrote to Mr. Jinnah : "You want me to come forward with some proposal. What proposal can I make except to ask you on bended knees to

"WHAT'S THE QUARREL ABOUT?"

be what I had thought you were ? But a proposal, to form a basis of unity between the two communities, has surely got to come from you."

Mr. Jinnah's response to this was : "I think you might have spared your appeal and need not have preached to me on your bended knees to be what you had thought I was . . . surely you know as much as I do what are the fundamental points in dispute. In my opinion it is as much up to you to suggest ways and means of tackling the problem."

In the same letter Mr. Jinnah had said, "As regards formulation of proposals which would form the basis of unity, do you think that this can be done by correspondence ?"

Responding to this suggestion, Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Mr. Jinnah discussing the proposition of personal talks between Mr. Jinnah and Congress leaders and suggested alternatively an initial meeting with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the outgoing Congress President, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, the new Congress President or Mahatma Gandhi himself. But Gandhiji preferred "that conversations should be opened in the first instance as between you and the Maulana-saheb (Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a member of the Congress Working Committee). But in every case regard me as at your disposal."

Mr. Jinnah's reply was in effect, a refusal to meet Maulana Azad. "I find there is no change in your attitude and mentality when you say you would be guided by Maulana Azad," wrote Mr. Jinnah, "We have reached a stage when no doubt should be left that you recognise the All-India Muslim League as the one authoritative organisation of the Muslims of India, and on the other hand, you represent the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country. *It is only on that basis that we can proceed further and devise a machinery of approach.*" (Italics mine.)

Mahatma Gandhi pleaded : "I am afraid I cannot fulfil the test. I cannot represent either the Congress or

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

the Hindus in the sense you mean ; but I would exert to the utmost all the moral influence I could have with them in order to secure an honourable settlement."

Thus ended the correspondence (on April 16, 1938), with Mr. Jinnah erecting a Maginot Line between himself and the Congress which Gandhiji could not penetrate.

Meantime, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had entered into correspondence with Mr. Jinnah. He started the exchanges, on January 19, 1938, requesting Mr. Jinnah "to let me know what exactly are the points in dispute which require consideration" and expressed the eagerness of the Congress "to do everything in our power to put an end to every misapprehension and endeavour to solve every problem that comes in the way of our developing our public life along right lines and promoting the unity and progress of the Indian people."

To this request for a clarification, Mr. Jinnah replied : "But do you now think that this matter can be discussed, much less solved, by and through correspondence ?"

Pandit Jawaharlal pleaded again, "I do not see how I can make any proposal, concrete or vague, when I do not know what the points in issue are," and added that any talk "was likely to be vague and infructuous if some clarification of ideas does not take place previously . . . I trust, therefore, you will help in clarifying the position by telling us where we differ and how you would like this difference to end."

In reply Mr. Jinnah rapped out : "The thing is that you prefer talking at each other, whereas I prefer talking to each other. Surely you know and you ought to know what are the fundamental points in dispute."

Pandit Jawaharlal again pressed : "I am afraid I must confess that I do not yet know what the fundamental points in dispute are. It is for this reason that I have been requesting you to clarify them. So far I have not received any help in this direction."

Mr. Jinnah still tenaciously refused to commit himself

"WHAT'S THE QUARREL ABOUT?"

to any precise points of dispute, and, instead, snarled, "I am only amazed at your ignorance."

But Pandit Nehru's patience was not yet exhausted and he again wrote : " I am afraid our letters to each other repeat themselves. I go on requesting you to tell us what exactly are the points in dispute which have to be discussed and you go on insisting that this should not be done by correspondence."

Jawaharlal added, " You will perceive my difficulty. I hope I am not making any insinuations or innuendoes, as you suggest in your last letter. Certainly it is not my intention to do so, nor to raise ' trifling matters which are not germane to the present subject.' It may be I am dense or not sufficiently acquainted with the intricacies of the problem. If so, I deserve to be enlightened."

Mr. Jinnah, then, replied, *inter alia*; " the question with which we started, as I understood, is of safeguarding the rights and the interests of the Mussalmans with regard to their religion, culture, language, personal laws and political rights in the national life, the government and the administration of the country. Various suggestions have been made which will satisfy the Mussalmans and create a sense of security and confidence in the majority community." Mr. Jinnah, then, recalled his Fourteen Points of 1929* and enclosed two newspaper cuttings

* The Following are the Fourteen Points :—

- 1) The form of the future constitution should be federal with residuary powers vested in the provinces. Central government to have the control only of such matters of common interest as may be guaranteed by the constitution.
- 2) Uniform measure of autonomy shall be granted to all provinces.
- 3) All legislatures in the country and other elected bodies should be reconstituted on the definite principle of adequate and effective representation of minorities in every province without reducing the majority of any province to a minority or even equality.
- 4) In the central legislature Muslim representation should not be less than one-third.
- 5) The representation of communal groups should continue to be by means of separate electorates as at present, provided that it should be open to any community at any time to abandon its separate electorate in favour of joint electorates.
- 6) Any territorial redistribution that might at any time be necessary should not in any way affect the Muslim majority in the Punjab, Bengal and North-West Frontier Province.
- 7) Full religious liberty, that is, liberty of belief, worship, observances, propaganda, association and education should be guaranteed to all communities.
- 8) No bill or resolution, or any part thereof, should be passed in any legislature or any other elected body, if three-fourths of the members of any com-

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THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

containing articles on the grievances and demands of the Muslims, and added, "now this is enough to show to you various suggestions that have been made, or are likely to be made, or are expected to be made which will have to be analysed and ultimately, it is the duty of every true nationalist, to whichever party or community he may belong, to make his business to examine the situation and bring about a pact between the Mussalmans and Hindus and create a real united front."

And then Mr. Jinnah added a sting to the tail of this long letter : "But if you desire that I should collect all these suggestions and submit to you as a petitioner for you and your colleagues to consider, I am afraid I can't do it nor can I do it for the purpose of carrying on further correspondence with regard to those various points with you."

Pandit Nehru brushed off that sting, and persevered. For once, it looked as though, at last, the two leaders were

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munity in that particular body oppose such a bill or resolution or part thereof, on the ground that it would be injurious to the interests of that community or, in the alternative, such other method is devised as may be found feasible and practicable to deal with such cases.

- 9) Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency.
- 10) Reform should be introduced in the NWF province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces.
- 11) Provision should be made in the constitution giving Muslims an adequate share along with the other Indians, in all the services of the State and in local self-governing bodies having due regard to the requirements of efficiency.
- 12) The constitution should embody adequate safeguards for the protection of Muslim culture and for the protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal laws and Muslim charitable institutions and for their due share in the grants-in-aid given by the State and by local self-governing bodies.
- 13) No cabinet, either central or provincial, should be formed without there being a proportion of at least one-third Muslim Ministers.
- 14) No change shall be made in the constitution by the central legislature except with the concurrence of the States constituting the Indian federation. The draft resolution also mentions an alternative to the above provision in the following terms :—

That, in the present circumstances, representation of Mussalmans in the different legislatures of the country and other elected bodies through the separate electorates is inevitable and further, the government being pledged over and over again not to disturb this franchise so granted to the Muslim community since 1909 till such time as the Mussalmans choose to abandon it, the Mussalmans will not consent to joint electorates unless Sind is actually constituted into a separate province and reforms in fact are introduced in the NWF province and Baluchistan on the same footing as in other provinces.

Further, it is provided that there shall be reservation of seats according to the Muslim population in the various provinces; but where Mussalmans are in a majority they shall not contest more seats than their population warrants.

The question of excess representation of Mussalmans over and above their population in provinces where they are in a minority is to be considered hereafter.

"WHAT'S THE QUARREL ABOUT?"

coming to grips with the issues—for, Mr. Jinnah seemed to have placed his cards on the table, whatever they were.

Jawaharlal immediately wrote back to Mr. Jinnah collating and enumerating the points given in Mr. Jinnah's letter and its enclosure cuttings, constituting the Muslim demands :

These demands comprised besides the Fourteen Points of 1929, additional thirteen points ! They were detailed as follows :—

1. The Fourteen Points of 1929.
2. The Congress should withdraw all opposition to the communal award and should not describe it as a negation of nationalism.
3. The share of the Muslims in the State services should be definitely fixed in the constitution by statutory enactment.
4. Muslim personal law and culture should be guaranteed by statute.
5. The Congress should take in hand the agitation in connection with the Shahidganj Mosque and should use its moral pressure to enable the Muslims to gain possession of the mosque.
6. The Muslims' right to call *azam* and perform their religious ceremonies should not be fettered in any way.
7. Muslims should have freedom to perform cow-slaughter.
8. Muslim majorities in the provinces where such majorities exist at present, must not be affected by any territorial redistribution or adjustments.
9. The 'Bande Mataram' song should be given up.
10. The Muslims want Urdu to be the national language of India and they desire to have statutory guarantees that the use of Urdu shall not be curtailed or damaged.
11. Muslim representation in the local bodies should be governed by the principles underlying the Communal Award, that is separate electorates and population strength.
12. The tri-colour flag should be changed or, alternatively, the flag of the Muslim League should be given equal importance.
13. Recognition of the Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Indian Muslims.
14. Coalition ministries.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Jawaharlal's letter discussed all these points in detail and explained the Congress attitude on each and the chances of its acceptance.

But Mr. Jinnah's response to this long, sincere and passionate letter was to accuse Jawaharlal of "turning and twisting what I wrote to you and putting entirely a wrong complexion upon the position I have placed before you at your request. You have formulated certain points in your letter which you father upon me to begin with." Mr. Jinnah, however, admitted in the same letter, "those are *some* of the matters which are undoubtedly agitating Muslim India."

Finally, (April 16, 1938), Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Mr. Jinnah : "I owe it to you and to myself to place frankly before you how my mind works and what my views are on the subject matter under discussion. Our viewpoints might differ, but I do believe that the margin of difference can be lessened by a frank approach on either side. I have sought to make this approach in all sincerity and with every desire on my part not to say anything that might come in the way."

Thus this long correspondence ended—and ended in smoke, solely because the elusive Mr. Jinnah dodged, hedged and parried every attempt by Pandit Nehru to come to grips with the issues in dispute.

Given the cordial spirit of goodwill—and this commodity has been consistently withheld by Mr. Jinnah and the League—most of the fresh fourteen points enumerated above could be settled by negotiation. Some of the points are purely local in character. Certain other demands, however, were arrogant and extravagant and the Congress was not in a position to concede.

A detailed discussion, however, of these fresh fourteen points and their relative merits has been rendered superfluous by virtue of the adoption of the two-nations theory by the League since then, which at one stroke wipes off all these demands, and puts the issue on a different plane altogether.

"WHAT'S THE QUARREL ABOUT?"

This review of the correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah serves only one purpose—to illustrate the exact attitude and tactics of Mr. Jinnah on the question of Hindu-Muslim settlement.

One thing emerges out of this correspondence as clear as a pikestaff: Mr. Jinnah did not—and does not—want a settlement of the communal question with the Congress.

The contrast between the approach of the Congress leaders and that of Mr. Jinnah to the subject is too glaring. The Congress leaders betray a genuine anxiety to arrive at a solution of the communal problem, while Mr. Jinnah meets them with truculence and irrelevance, and in some parts, even a positive anxiety to avoid coming to grips with the issues involved. There is an unmistakable absence on the part of Mr. Jinnah of the desire and will to arrive at a settlement with the Congress. Another feature of Mr. Jinnah's letters is a studied offensiveness of tone and a callous disregard for common courtesy to his political opponents.

Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, the next Congress President, picked up the threads of negotiations with Mr. Jinnah. But he, too, could not penetrate the Maginot Line—the twin demand that the Congress must avow itself a Hindu organisation and accept the League as the sole representative organisation of the Muslims.

It is, however, interesting to recall that this demand upon the Congress to avow itself a Hindu organisation came from the same Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah who only in 1925 (then, too, he was out of the Congress) had taken the *Times of India* to task for attributing to him the statement that the Congress was a Hindu body!*

In the meantime, Mr. Jinnah's political appetite grew. In 1939, he added yet another overall demand to his inex-

* "The Editor, 'Times of India.' Sir—I wish again to correct the statement which is attributed to me and to which you have given currency more than once and now again repeated by your correspondent "Banker" in the second column of your issue of 1st October, that I denounced the Congress as 'Hindu organisation.' I publicly corrected this misleading report of my speech in your columns soon after it appeared: but it did not find a place in columns of your paper and so may I request you to publish this and oblige?—M. A. Jinnah."

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

haustible list—fifty per cent share in everything—government, administration and services.

Mr. Jinnah was now galloping from demands to demands. This latest fifty-fifty demand sought to reduce the majority to equality or even to minority as the “non-Muslims” were to have the other fifty !

In 1929, Mr. Jinnah in his Fourteen Points (Point No. 3) had insisted on the principle that in allotting seats in the legislatures, the majority should not be reduced to minority or equality. This principle enunciated by himself—as Dr. B. R. Ambedkar points out in his “Thoughts on Pakistan”—was now abandoned, and Mr. Jinnah demanded that the majority shall be reduced to equality, if not to minority !

Here it is pertinent to look into the allegation that “the Muslims were kept out of all share in administrative power and governance.” With the sole object of satisfying the Muslims and creating a balance of political power between the two major communities of India, the British Government in 1935 increased the number of Muslim provinces by giving the North-West Frontier and Sind the status of independent provinces. Thus out of eleven provinces in the whole of India, five provinces—Bengal, Punjab, N.-W. F., Sind and Assam could have governments predominated by Muslims. It has to be noted that thus seventy-four per cent of the Muslim population was under Muslim governments.

Of the 71 ministers of the eleven provinces, 26 were Muslims, 10 of other minority communities and 36 Hindus ; of the 35 ministers in the “Hindu Congress provinces,” six were Muslims and five of other minority communities. Some time later, the Congress formed coalition ministries in two more provinces, N.-W.F. and Assam. That increased the number of Muslim ministers still further. In the North-West Frontier Province three out of four ministers, including the Prime Minister, Dr. Khan Sahib, were Muslims, while in Assam there were three Muslims and five non-Muslim ministers.

6. "JINNUINE" AUCTION

MEANWHILE dark, ominous clouds of war were banking up the European horizon, and they were casting their sinister shadows over India.

The Congress reaction to the menacing developments in Europe was a nervousness for the future and a further intensification of efforts to remove the communal obstacle on the country's freedom path and forge a united political India to face a future fraught with war.

But the Muslim League's mind ran in a different direction. It had watched with a thrill and interest the Munich episode and its immediate sequel; made a mental note of Hitler's easy victories through his go-getting new technique in politics. The League drew its own lessons from the Sudeten German question and the British handling of it. And the League stiffened its attitude to the communal settlement and the appeasement-minded Congress.

The anti-Congress propaganda campaign was being pursued so ruthlessly and relentlessly that it bordered on a psychological civil war, which again and again found expression in communal riots in the United Provinces, Bihar, the Central Provinces, Bombay and Sholapur.

On August 27, 1939—seven days before the actual outbreak of war in Europe—the Muslim League Working Committee, by a resolution, deplored "the policy of the British Government towards the Muslims in India, in attempting to force upon them, against their will, in particular the federal scheme, as embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 which allows a permanent, hostile communal majority to trample upon their religious, political, social and economic rights" and expressed "regret at the utter neglect" shown by the governors of the Congress-governed provinces "in exercising their special powers to protect and secure justice to the minorities."

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

This was the thin end of the wedge. Thus the foundation was laid to a calculated campaign to wrest political concessions and power from a war-menaced Britain ; to carve a strong position of vantage for the League in the body politic of India; to gather up strength for an ultimate political show-down with the Congress, by joining forces with Government where necessary and expedient.

September 3rd—Britain and France declare war on Germany—that evening India finds herself in it—the Viceroy holds consultations with Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Mohmad Ali Jinnah—India's immediate reaction is warm sympathy for Britain's cause in the war against the aggressor.

Mahatma Gandhi declares : “ I am not just now thinking of India's deliverance ; it will come but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled ? ” He could not “ contemplate, without being stirred to the very depth, the destruction of London.”

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru proclaims : “ It is perfectly true that in a conflict between democracy and freedom on the one side, and fascism and aggression on the other, our sympathies must inevitably lie on the side of democracy.”

But Mr. Jinnah's reaction is : “ Naturally my sympathies are with the people of Poland, France and Britain as we are at present part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. If, however, Britain wants to prosecute this war successfully, she must take Muslim India into her confidence through their accredited organisation, the All-India Muslim League.”

Mr. Jinnah was bargain-bent.

The Viceroy addressed the Central Legislature and announced that the necessity of concentrating on the task in front of them left no alternative but to suspend the work in connexion with the federation, though federation was the ultimate objective, and further appealed for unity—Mr. Jinnah had gained his point—the federal scheme was on its way to the scrap-heap!

"JINNUINE" AUCTION

But to the Congress and the country at large the outbreak of war offered a fresh and an excellent opportunity to reopen negotiations for a Hindu-Muslim settlement. Under the pressure of war emergency, the two parties could start on a clean slate. The Congress grasped the opportunity.

Once again the Congress strove to clear the decks for such negotiations and prepare the requisite friendly and cordial atmosphere. The Viceroy held second consultations with Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah. Following this, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru met Mr. Jinnah to initiate talks. And Mahatma Gandhi issued an appeal to Congressmen to bury the hatchet and paid a personal tribute to Mr. Jinnah. The late Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, issued a similar appeal to the country to sink differences and unite to fight the war.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, had, meanwhile, invited Mr. Jinnah to attend the meeting of the Congress Working Committee specially convened to consider the situation arising out of India's entry into the war.

Mr. Jinnah, however, refused to be moved. He turned down the invitation on the plea of unsuitability of time and place of the meeting. Instead, the League passed the thundering resolution about "domination of the Hindus" over Muslim minorities "whose life and liberty, property and honour are in danger, and even their religious rights and culture are being assailed and annihilated every day under the Congress governments in various provinces."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad immediately wrote to Mr. Jinnah challenging these sweeping, vague and grave charges made by the League against the Congress governments, and offered to get them investigated into by Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice of India. The letter declared these charges "wholly unfounded" and stated "the governments concerned have enquired into the matter whenever such charges have been made and have denied them. On a previous occasion we expressed our willingness to have any

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

specific instances investigated by an impartial authority. We feel strongly, and I am sure you will agree with us, that such charges when seriously made, should be enquired into and either substantiated or disproved. We would like this course to be adopted."

Mr. Jinnah turned down the offer and wrote back that he had placed the matter before the Viceroy who is "the proper authority to take such action and adopt such measures as would meet our requirements and would restore complete sense of security and satisfaction among the Mussalmans in those provinces where the Congress ministries are in charge of the administration."

However, nothing has yet been heard on the matter from the Viceroy.

With the prospect of the Congress fading out of provincial administrations, Mr. Jinnah was now busy driving a bargain with the Viceroy on behalf of the League—the "Jinnuine" political auction had commenced. He demanded and obtained from the British government the recognition of the Muslim League's "right to full say in any future constitutional arrangements." He was confidently looking forward to more concessions from the government. He had no use for the Congress now!

The Viceroy made his statement on the war aims and had nothing more to offer to India than a "consultative group of all major political parties in British India and of all the Princes" to be presided over by the Governor-General. The Congress turned away in disappointment—and resigned office in eight out of the eleven provinces.

The Congress hoped, by the way, that the resignations of the Congress Governments, which "were oppressing the Muslims," would remove the last obstacle to negotiations for a settlement with the League. It was, however, a vain hope.

The Viceroy again invited Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, this time for a joint consultation. Nothing, however, came out of it, and Mr. Jinnah allowed the Congress leaders to announce the breakdown of the

"JINNUINE" AUCTION

joint talks, without himself assigning any reason therefor.

Prior to these joint talks with the Viceroy, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Rajendra Prasad had met Mr. Jinnah with a view to find a common agreement on the issues before them. These talks were now pursued by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. But once again Mr. Jinnah's intransigence made progress difficult. The basis of the talks was a popular Central Executive responsible to the legislature. Mr. Jinnah again demanded that the negotiations could be carried on only after both the Government and the Congress recognised the League as the sole representative organisation of the Muslims. And then would insist on all the Muslim ministers being the League nominees commanding the confidence of the Muslim members of the Central legislature.

Once again there was the absence of a genuine desire and will on the part of Mr. Jinnah to solve a mutual problem to mutual good. The talks broke down.

Mahatma Gandhi complained that the League was looking to British power to safeguard Muslim rights and exclaimed "nothing that the Congress can do or concede will satisfy him (Mr. Jinnah), for he can always and naturally from his own standpoint, ask for more than the Congress can give or guarantee. Therefore there can be no limit to the League demands."

Mr. Jinnah rapped out, "Mr. Gandhi could not have said anything worse about me or about the Muslims of India at this juncture," and considered Mahatma Gandhi's statement a libel on the whole Muslim community.

Notwithstanding, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru persevered with the negotiations with Mr. Jinnah, and declared, "there is no difference with Mr. Jinnah on the final objective of India." He was to meet Mr. Jinnah again towards the end of December, in Bombay.

Meantime, Mr. Jinnah threw a spanner into the works by ordering an India-wide celebration of the exit of Congress governments in the shape of a "Deliverance Day." This anti-Congress demonstration on December 22, only a

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

few days before the projected Nehru-Jinnah meeting in Bombay, completely vitiated the atmosphere and the meeting did not materialise.

Thus the year 1939 closed without yielding any fruit to the frantic efforts by the Congress to settle with the League, and with Mr. Jinnah busy peddling his wares to the Viceregal Lodge for a bid from that quarter.

Nineteenforty opened with the Viceroy's proclamation of Dominion Status as the constitutional goal of India—and renewed flickerings of hopes of a political and communal settlement in the country.

The Viceroy made a fervent appeal to the leaders of the great political parties of India to terminate the deplorable state of things in the country.

While Mahatma Gandhi saw "germs of a settlement" with the Muslim League in the Viceregal statement, Mr. Jinnah got the undertaking to "examine the constitutional field in consultation with the parties and interests on the basis of negotiation and not dictation."

The Viceroy held another series of consultations with Indian leaders. All that the Viceroy had to offer the people was expansion of his Executive Council with more Indian nominees therein. Mahatma Gandhi came away disappointed. But Mr. Jinnah stayed behind to negotiate a deal with the Viceroy on the basis of a "war contract" with the League.

The League, meantime, had travelled to the two-nations theory, and at its annual session held at Lahore, it adopted the Pakistan resolution.

Events in Europe were now leading to a grave crisis. Poland, Norway, Holland, Denmark, Belgium went under Hitler's steam roller. And the month of June saw the shocking collapse of France. Britain passed through the ordeal of Dunkirk. And war threatened to come—for the first time in many centuries—to Britain's mainland.

Both the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy made earnest appeals to the people of India to realise the

"JINNUINE" AUCTION

gravity of the situation and to help in the intensification of war effort and organisation of the defence of India.

Mr. Jinnah's response to these appeals was to point out that till then the Muslims had created no difficulties in the prosecution of war. The provinces where the League had a larger voice in the administration had freely co-operated with the Government. Mr. Jinnah said it was now up to the British Government "to assure trust in Muslim leadership. There are many ways of doing so. As confident friends, seek our whole-hearted co-operation. We shall not fail."

On June 17, the League Working Committee passed a resolution stating that the proposals for the defence of India indicated in the statements of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief fell far short of the urgent requirements of the situation and expressed the view that unless a satisfactory basis for close co-operation were agreed upon on an all-India basis between the Government and the Muslim League and such other parties as are willing to undertake the responsibility for the defence of the country, the real purpose and objective would not be served.

On the basis of this resolution, Mr. Jinnah was invited by the Viceroy for an interview. On the suggestion of the Viceroy, Mr. Jinnah presented the Viceroy his "Tentative Proposals." In this memorandum Mr. Jinnah outlined the League's terms of co-operation with Government and his proposals for interim arrangements of government. For the period of war Mr. Jinnah suggested that the following steps should be taken to comply with the formula, namely, co-operation with the Government with an equal share in the authority of the government :—

- (a) That the Executive Council of the Viceroy should be enlarged within the framework of the present constitutional existing law, the additional number to be settled by further discussion; but it being understood that the Muslim representation must be equal to that of the Hindus if the Congress comes in, otherwise they should have the majority of the additional members, as it is

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

obvious that the main burden and the responsibility shall be borne by Muslims in that case.

- (b) In the provinces where section 93 has to operate, non-official Advisers should be appointed, the number to be fixed after discussion and the majority of the non-official Advisers should be the representatives of Muslims; and where the provinces can be run by a combination of parties or coalition naturally it would be for the parties to adjust matters by agreement among themselves.
- (c) There should be a War Council consisting of not less than fifteen members including the President, to be presided over by the Viceroy. I do not like the expression War Consultative Committee. This council should regularly meet to deal with and review the general situation as it may develop from time to time and advise the Government with regard to matters in connexion with the prosecution of war generally, and in particular the fullest development of the defence possible, and finance, and to make a thorough economic and industrial drive. In this body it will not be difficult to secure the representation and full co-operation of the Indian Princes and as far as I can judge they would have no difficulty in joining it. It is through this body that the association of the Princes can be secured. Here again the representation of Muslim India must be equal to that of the Hindus if the Congress comes in, otherwise they should have the majority.

Finally, the representatives of the Muslims in the proposed War Council and the Executive Council of the Governor-General and the additional non-official Advisers of the Governors should be chosen by the Muslim League.

In return for this conditional co-operation with Government, Mr. Jinnah demanded (1) no pronouncement or statement should be made by Government that will militate against the basis and fundamental principles of the Lahore resolution (Pakistan); (2) a categorical assurance that no interim or final scheme of constitution be adopted by the British Government without the previous approval of the Muslims. And thus began the famous Jinnah-Viceroy correspondence, which lasted nearly eight months before negotiations broke down. The Viceroy offered every verbal assurance demanded by Mr. Jinnah regarding the future

"JINNUINE" AUCTION

constitutional arrangements, but regarding the present, he showed no inclination to part with power—either to the Congress or even to the League.

In the meantime, the grim battle of Britain was fought out between the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe in Europe—and Britain was not yet out of the wood.

And came the famous August Offer by the Viceroy. This offer comprised of inviting "a certain number of representative Indians" to join the Viceroy's Executive Council, and the establishment of a War Advisory Council, "which would meet at regular intervals, and which would contain representatives of the Indian States, and of other interests in the national life of India as a whole."

The offer reiterated that Dominion Status was their objective for India. As regards the minorities, the Viceroy repeated the assurance that "my declaration of last October does not exclude examination of any part either of the Act of 1935 or of the policy and plans on which it is based. His Majesty's Government's concern that full weight should be given to the views of the Minorities in any revision has also been brought out."

The Viceroy then added, "It goes without saying that they could not contemplate the transfer of the present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of Government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements of India's national life nor could they be parties to the coercion of such elements into submission to such a Government."

Regarding the future, the Viceroy said, "His Majesty's Government authorise me to declare that they will most readily assent to the setting up after the conclusion of the war with the least possible delay of a body representative of the principal elements in India's national life in order to devise the framework of the new constitution and they will lend every aid in their power to hasten decisions on all relevant matters to the utmost degree."

The August Offer was rejected both by the Congress and the League. The Congress rejected it because it failed

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

to transfer any real power to Indian hands. The League, too, rejected it for the same reason and because the Viceroy would not accept Mr. Jinnah's "war contract" with the League. And Mr. Jinnah warned the Government: "In making the present offer, the British Government was trifling with ninety million Muslims."

The Congress Working Committee met at Delhi and formulated its demand for a national government. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President, held consultations with Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, and Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Premier of Bengal, two pillars of the League. The two Premiers showed genuine desire and accommodation to reach a settlement with the Congress on the basis of a national government at the centre. Mr. Jinnah then blew up the negotiations by announcing that the two Premiers had no authority to discuss or come to an adjustment over the head of the League Working Committee. He then criticised the Congress demand for national government and argued that national government would mean Congress raj. "The word 'national' has been flagrantly abused," Mr. Jinnah declared, "If the demand for national government is met, it will mean a Hindu majority government—a position which will never be accepted by the Muslim...."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad immediately telegraphed to Mr. Jinnah that the Congress demand for national government meant composite cabinet not limited to any single party. The Maulana enquired whether it was the position of the League that it would not agree to any provisional arrangement not based on the two-nations scheme.

Mr. Jinnah's response to this clarification was to throw all decency and good manners to the winds and pour irrelevant abuse on the Maulanasahib. Mr. Jinnah called Maulna Azad a "show-boy of the Congress" and "refused to discuss with you by correspondence or otherwise as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslim India."

The Congress, nevertheless, persevered. Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar then made the "sporting offer," which

"JINNUINE" AUCTION

was duly endorsed by the Congress. The Congress offered Mr. Jinnah to form the national government with himself as the premier.

Mr. Jinnah was, however, determined not to respond. He ignored the offer, and later arrogantly and irrelevantly declared that the Muslim League was prepared to take over rule from the British "for the British took over the empire from the hands of the Muslims."

Meantime, the government having refused the Congress demand, the Congress launched civil disobedience movement.

Mr. Jinnah queered the pitch for the Congress by threatening it with dire consequences and characterised the Satyagraha move as an "attempt to coerce the British Government to concessions over the heads and at the cost of the Muslims." In the same breath, he wooed the Government with another offer of co-operation. "A great deal in men, money and material and whole-hearted support of ninety million Muslims," said Mr. Jinnah, "I am prepared to bring all this to the common pool, in exchange for equal and really effective share in power."

Thus the year 1940 ended with the Congress in voluntary exile in India, and Britain in a tight corner in the European war, and Mr. Jinnah, taking advantage of the situation, trying to drive an even harder bargain with the government, now cajoling, now bullying it into concessions.

At the Madras session of the League, Mr. Jinnah blatantly wooed the Viceroy to walk into his parlour. He purred and urged the British Government to give up their "policy of appeasement towards those who are bent upon frustrating the war efforts and to get on with those who wanted to get on with them." Mr. Jinnah even pleaded that the League had not embarrassed the Government in its war effort, whereas the Congress had. Then Mr. Jinnah snarled and warned Britain that the "policy of inaction, of weakness and vacillation of the British Government would prove more dangerous than it did in Europe." "Are you

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

going to act or allow somebody else to come here and do the job for you?" he shouted.

The year 1941 was characterised by the efforts of Liberals, headed by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, to resolve the political deadlock in India and persuade Mr. Jinnah to align himself with their efforts. If the Congress was *non persona grata* with Mr. Jinnah, it was expected that at least Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would be acceptable to Mr. Jinnah. But it was a futile hope. At the outset, Mr. Jinnah repelled Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's attempts to bring about a meeting between him and Mahatma Gandhi. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru presided over the Non-Party Conference in Bombay in March of the year. The Conference passed a resolution demanding an Executive Council comprising non-official Indians "drawn from important elements in the public life of the country," with transfer of all portfolios, including Finance and Defence, to Indians. The resolution conceded that this Executive Council should be responsible to the Crown.

But even this modest and reasonable demand was unacceptable to Mr. Amery, who now questioned the representative character of the Non-Party Conference, and suggested that their proposals should have enlisted the Muslim League's support. And Mr. Jinnah played the accompaniment to Mr. Amery's tune by denouncing the Non-Party Conference and its resolution, characterising the proposals of the Conference as intended to torpedo the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. He described the Conference "as composed of men practically of the same school of thought and of elements that are against the Muslim League" and asked "what difference is there between the members of the Liberal Party, the Congress, the Hindu Nationalist League and the Mahasabha?" He called the statement issued by the Standing Committee of the Conference as "a worthless document" and "a crooked and tortuous statement and in certain parts perversion of truth."

In a Press statement, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru hit back: "I thought that the discussion of the Pakistan issue had

"JINNUINE" AUCTION

been postponed professedly till after the war and the interim arrangement at the Centre would no more have prevented the Congress or any other party from raising any other demand, but Mr. Jinnah will not be content until every other party surrenders to his demand now and at this moment." Sir Tej asked, "Am I to understand that if the condition precedent to Mr. Jinnah's demanding agreement to Pakistan is not fulfilled by others at this stage, then he will not mind how long the present deadlock continues and what happens to the whole country ?"

"Mr. Jinnah has now come out in his true colours. No scheme of Government will satisfy him even for the period of war unless it is in furtherance of the disruption of India," stated a statement issued by the Standing Committee of the Non-Party Conference. "The Committee would ask all right-minded men to consider whether in view of Mr. Jinnah's latest pronouncement any negotiation with him is possible except on the basis of destroying the unity of the country."

The statement asked : "Will Mr. Jinnah explain a little more directly how the Conference proposals are likely to injure the Muslims ? . . . Is Mr. Jinnah opposed in his heart of hearts to the appointment of an Indian as Defence Member ? . . . Is he in favour of an Executive Council composed of English Civil Servants and non-official Indians during the period of war ? Then, why does he hesitate to make known his views ? What is it exactly that he wants ? Why does he, like Mr. Amery, content himself merely with a negative attitude ?"

"The Committee are more convinced than ever that the political future of India should not be allowed to be dependent on Mr. Jinnah's dictate," concluded the statement.

Even so was the honest, reasonable and modest effort of the Non-Party Conference torpedoed by Mr. Amery and sabotaged by Mr. Jinnah—each in pursuit of his own ulterior motive—Mr. Amery to retain British political grip over India, and Mr. Jinnah to keep the ring clear of the

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Congress and others and thus to capture power for himself and the League.

And this alliance continues to the detriment of India and her national aspirations.

DECEMBER 7, 1941, violently shook up the static Indian and Far Eastern kaleidoscope. That day Japan stabbed the United States in Pearl Harbour back—and switched on the war in the East, dragging America into it, besides Britain. And war overnight became a stark, grim reality to India, while unwilling Britain was compelled to fight in two hemispheres against two formidable foes.

In four months Japan had wiped out Hongkong, Malaya, Singapore, the Dutch East Indies, the Philippines, swallowed southern Burma, and was knocking at the gates of Rangoon at one end and threatening White Man's Australia at the other.

Britain harried and hard pressed at two opposite ends of her far-flung domain, and a dangerous enemy fast approaching the Indian border, both the British Government and the Congress seemed in a mood to turn a new leaf in their relations and reconsider the proposition of active association and co-operation of the people in the country's defence against a common enemy.

But Mr. Jinnah still kept his head buried in the sands of communal claims and political bargaining.

The British Government announced Sir Stafford Cripps' visit to India with draft constitutional proposals. This announcement raised high hopes of a settlement with Britain satisfactory to India—nationalist India laid great store by Socialist Cripps, who was a proven friend of India !

The Cripps mission, however, in the picturesque phraseology of Dr. Pattabhi Seetharamayya, went up like a rocket and came down like a stick—and added despair to the sense of political frustration in the country.

Throughout the Cripps negotiations Mr. Jinnah's attitude and role were curious. He was the sphinx of Indian politics. He sat on the fence and watched with detachment

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

the Congress moves and thought to score points over the Congress—and then joined in the game of aiding and abetting Sir Stafford Cripps' denunciation of the Congress.

Disappointed and crest-fallen, Cripps laid the responsibility for the failure of his mission at the doors of the Congress—he accused the Congress of a basic unwillingness on its part to settle with the British Government and vaguely talked of the inability of the political parties in India to agree among themselves and connected it with the failure of his mission. While the Congress indignantly denied and exposed his allegations, Mr. Jinnah obligingly came out in support of Cripps' contentions and launched a flank attack on the Congress. "The negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps broke down not on the issue of independence but because of the refusal of the British Government to hand over the Muslims and minorities to the tender mercies of the Congress."*

In the meantime, Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar sponsored the cause of the Muslim League within the Congress and started an energetic campaign to persuade the Congress to a categorical commitment to the Pakistan of Mr. Jinnah's conception. With the Japanese threat to the south-eastern coast of India increasing, Mr. Rajagopalachariar intensified his campaign. His main objective was consummation of the national government ideal. The text of his campaign was: Only a united national government backed by the people can mobilise the country for successful defence against the enemy. The enemy menace is immediate, therefore the need of a national government is immediate—and a united demand for that national government alone can compel the British Government to concede it. Hence forging that unity immediately—at any cost and on any terms—was to him imperative.

The fallacy in this syllogism is the unwarranted assumption that the British Government would concede a demand the moment it is united and subscribed to by the Congress and the League. Cripps himself gave one

"JINNASTICS"

demonstration of that fallacy when he made clear that not even a united demand could transfer the Defence portfolio to an Indian Minister or convert the Viceroy's Executive Council into a "national cabinet" responsible to the people. Therefore no sanctions except perhaps a mass movement to enforce the demand might compel the British Government to concede it—and this implies, in the first place a mass struggle under the joint auspices of the League and the Congress and it is doubtful whether the present leadership of the League is prepared for such an extreme step, for to Mr. Jinnah illegal activity is anathema.

Secondly, this step involved time, and the immediate emergency would not wait till the mass struggle "delivered the goods"—and thus the objective of an immediate national government to face an immediate emergency would not be realised. If that is so, there is no sense in the Congress allowing itself to be stampeded into conceding a principle which it is convinced is evil and wrong, when even the great objective for which the sacrifice is demanded of the Congress would not be achieved—namely, immediate consummation of national government to face an immediate emergency.

The Congress stand on this subject has been made very clear by its resolution on the Cripps proposals. That resolution while asserting that the Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity, nevertheless stated that it could not "think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in an Indian nation against their *declared and established will*." (italics mine.)

In other words, the Congress has accepted the principle of self-determination to the Muslims with the proviso that the Muslims as a whole must prove their "declared and established will" in favour of a separate sovereign state carved out of the country. This could be done either on the floor of a constituent assembly (and separate electorates even for the purposes of the constituent assembly has been conceded by the Congress) or by means of a plebiscite.

Mr. Rajagopalachariar argued that he was doing

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

nothing more than pursuing the logic of the Congress Working Committee's resolution when he asked the A.I.C.C. to "acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation, should the same be persisted in when the time comes for framing the future constitution of India" and to "invite the Muslim League for consultation for the purpose of arriving at an agreement and securing installation of a national government to meet the present emergency."

Mr. Rajagopalachariar even resigned his membership of the Congress Working Committee in order to be free to canvass support for his point of view and himself moved this resolution at the A.I.C.C. meeting at Allahabad on May 2, "Pakistan is only a ghost and I want to hold and face it," said Mr. Rajagopalachariar moving his resolution.

The A.I.C.C. threw out Mr. Rajagopalachariar's resolution and adopted in its stead Pandit Jagatnaraian Lal's counter-resolution refusing to countenance "any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to a component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian union or the federation" as "highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole, and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal."

That resolution gave enough and plenty of ammunition to Mr. Jinnah and the League to keep their long-range guns going at the Congress for the rest of the year until the Congress went into the wilderness in August 1942, and even after.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress President himself, has given the ruling that the Congress resolution is in no way contrary to the principle of self-determination. The Congress thinks Pakistan is wrong. But if majority of Muslims think otherwise, the Congress recognises their right to have their own way and is not prepared to coerce them to change their opinion. At the same time the Congress

"JINNASTICS"

has the right to hold to its own opinion that Pakistan is detrimental to national interests.

But Mr. Jinnah preferred to ignore the Congress President's ruling and authoritative and authentic interpretation of the Congress stand and hugged to the Jagatnaraian Lal resolution—that was another good stick to beat the Congress with !

The wolf told the lamb : " If not you, your father must have done it !" That is the spirit with which Mr. Jinnah is pursuing his imaginary quarrel with the Congress. It is a new technique, entirely his own—it breaks no bones—especially one's own—and it keeps the crease of one's pants unspoilt—and yet brings home the goods in the peculiar, artificially created circumstances obtaining in the country, at the present moment. It is " Jinnastics ".

After all that, one would imagine the League and Mr. Jinnah would rally round Mr. Rajagopalachariar and actively co-operate with him in realising a common objective! All that " C.R. ", however, got was loud, but empty applause from the League press and the League leaders. Mr. Jinnah watched the episode with amusement, and then declared it was futile to negotiate a settlement with Mr. Rajagopalachariar as he held no sanctions and represented but himself.

The Madras leader's most passionate overtures left Mr. Jinnah unmoved and frigid, and even that super-optimist seems to be disillusioned now. In a recent speech (9th September, 1943) Mr. Rajagopalachariar confessed, " Mr. Jinnah is making things difficult. If the British alone stood in the way and not Mr. Jinnah," Mr. Rajagopalachariar thought he had a way out of the present *impasse*.

8. THE LAST EFFORT

THE next, a supreme, effort for a political rally and settlement with the League—by now it was not exactly a matter of Hindu-Muslim settlement, but a matter of the entire nationalist India persuading Mr. Jinnah to give up intransigence and align the League with other parties in India for a united political demand—was made during the twenty-four days preceding the historic All-India Congress Committee's meeting at Bombay, on August 7, 1942.

At Wardha, on July 14, 1942, the Congress decided to take the plunge—to launch a mass movement to enforce its demand for a national government now. The Congress Working Committee, then, convened the A.I.C.C. on August 7, at Bombay to ratify the resolution on mass movement.

The tense interim period was utilised by the Congress and other parties and leaders to hammer out a common united demand. All parties except the Muslim League—and nobody could determine the mind of the League—were agreed as to the minimum content of that national demand, namely, the formation of a Central Executive, for the duration, composed entirely of Indians, representing the leading political parties in the land.

As Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, of Hyderabad, Deccan, put it, it was "clear from the trend of public opinion in India that a predominant majority of Indians in all camps, including the Congress, will be satisfied if the above two changes (viz., the Viceroy to give an undertaking not to exercise his veto against the unanimous opinion of the Indian members of the Executive Council and that the Indian Defence Member be allowed some natural voice in the shaping and control of the country's defence policy without prejudice to the technical direction of military operations in India by the British Commander-in-Chief or to allied strategy) are effected in some agreeable manner in the proposals brought here by Sir Stafford Cripps."*

* Dr. Syed Abdul Latif's statement to the Associated Press, Hyderabad, Deccan, Aug. 5, 1942

THE LAST EFFORT

The Congress was now in a hurry, and again strove hard for a settlement with the League, and was in a mood to go very far in satisfying the League demands.

And as the fateful August 7th drew nearer, the pace and tempo quickened of the efforts of public leaders to find a formula for the political demand to the Government and a communal settlement with the League.

To the Government, the Congress implored : Please treat Indians as your equals and true allies ; allow us the privilege of fighting and conducting our part in the war and defending our country.

To their own countrymen, particularly the Muslims, and Britain and the world, the Congress declared, "The Congress does not desire power for itself but for all. If real power is handed over to the Congress, surely it will approach other parties and persuade them to join. We have no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League or any other party provided it was real independence. That party will have to approach other parties as no single party can function properly without the co-operation of other parties."*

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, a prominent member of the Congress Working Committee, addressing a public meeting in Gujarat, declared, "Congress is prepared to give in writing that it will be dissolved the moment India has attained freedom. Once India is free, the Congress would have fulfilled its mission. The Congress has not sought power for itself, but will be satisfied if it is handed over to the League or the Mahasabha or any other party."

The Congress President put forth the proposal that accredited representatives of the Congress and the League should meet and hammer out an agreement—"put their heads together and never part until they have reached a settlement."

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Dr. M. R. Jayakar, the inevitable twins of Indian politics, worked for the idea of a Round Table Conference of all parties. They jointly and

* Maulana Azad, Congress President's assurance to the Muslim League.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

individually issued appeals to the Government and the Congress and other parties in India to avert the mass struggle and formulate a political agreement. They begged the Viceroy and Indian members of his Executive Council to take the initiative in the matter.

The Congress overtures to 'the League moved and stirred even many a Muslim Leaguer. Maulana Hasrat Mohani, a prominent member of the League, wired to Mr. Jinnah :—

"Your condemnation of Mahatmaji is quite unjustified. He is opposed to Pakistan dominion as agreed to between you and Mr. Rajagopalachariar, and not to a free Pakistan as envisaged in my scheme of the union of the Federal Republic of India. . . . Even the latest Congress Working Committee resolution approved of a federal constitution with largest measure of autonomy and residuary powers for the federating units. Please place my views before the League Working Committee for consideration. I also hope the Muslim League will modify its attitude regarding Mahatmaji's movement."

Meantime, another frantic effort was made to bring about a personal meeting between Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah.

All these determined and persistent efforts came to nought—because Mr. Jinnah non-co-operated with them—they had failed to touch his heart, and he kept aloof and away from these political parleys.

In pursuance of the Congress President's proposal for a meeting of accredited representatives of the Congress and the League to hammer out an agreement, Dr. Syed Abdul Latif, of Hyderabad, Deccan, valiantly strove to build a bridge between the Congress and the League. He first sought to clear the ground for such a rapprochement by seeking clarification of certain doubtful points from the Congress.

In reply Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote to Dr. Latif : "I repeat it now that no part of the Delhi resolution (Congress acceptance of the principle of self-determination) to which you refer has in any way been affected or modified by any subsequent resolution. In fact, the Delhi resolution

THE LAST EFFORT

was confirmed by the A.I.C.C.* With reference to your second question, it was never contemplated that the examination and discussion of the viewpoints of the representatives of the two organisations should not be free, frank and full ; in fact, it was fully understood that these representatives would in no way be under any restriction in their deliberations and discussions subject only to the usual condition that their agreed decision would be submitted to their respective bodies for ratification."

Dr. Abdul Latif obtained a similar assurance from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru too.

In keeping with his recent reputation, Mr. Jinnah, however, lost no time in denouncing this correspondence between the Congress leaders and Dr. Latif and the latter was constrained to observe : "the letters which in consequence were exchanged for publication between me and the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, have grievously displeased Mr. Jinnah. It looks as if he did not like the issue to be clarified. arguments such as these only go to confirm the view held by the Congressites that Mr. Jinnah was never serious about a settlement with the Congress. For aught I see, it is clear to my mind, from my talks with its leaders, that the Congress on its part appeared to be sincerely anxious to settle its differences with the League."†

On the eve of the fateful A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay, Dr. Syed Abdul Latif made another passionate appeal to the Muslim League "to co-operate with the Congress and other parties to bring about an immediate revision of the Cripps proposals such as might wean Gandhiji from his threatened course."

This statement deserves to be quoted in extenso, as in the first place, it comes from a person who was the author

* See also page 54. The Congress President's ruling that the Jagatnarsainil resolution is in no way contrary to the principle of self-determination. The Congress thinks Pakistan is wrong. But if majority of Muslims think otherwise, the Congress recognises their right to have their own way and is not prepared to coerce them to change their opinion. At the same time Congress has the right to hold to its own opinion, that Pakistan is detrimental to national interests.

† Dr. Abdul Latif's statement to the press, dated Hyderabad, Deccan, August 16, 1942.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

of the original Pakistan scheme and until recently closely associated with the League, and secondly because it vividly illustrates Mr. Jinnah's attitude and tactics towards the Congress :—

" Hopes of the two parties settling their differences were raised a few days ago when Mr. Jinnah invited Mr. Gandhi through the Press to seek an honourable settlement and Mr. Gandhi responded to the invitation by asking to 'accept the Congress President's offer that Congress and League representatives should put their heads together and never part until they have reached a settlement.' But on July 31 comes a Press statement from Mr. Jinnah throwing overboard the Congress offer... instead of pursuing the move for an honourable settlement initiated by himself, he not only side-tracks it at a critical moment, but rakes up old memories and pours abuse and ridicule over the head of Mahatma Gandhi, the one man with whom he will ultimately have to reach a settlement. And he does this in a language and style so alien to Muslim cultural traditions. Mr. Jinnah has many personal virtues; but his manners as a leader, his treatment of political opponents, his obstructionist tactics and his aggressive method of presentation of the Muslim standpoint have all gone to weaken what is intrinsically a strong cause of the Muslims. He must know that the intellectuals among the Muslims, particularly the younger generation, are growing increasingly restless over his politics. If Mr. Jinnah would lay his hands on his heart and reflect, he would feel that during these three years of war, he has been simply sitting on the fence, surrounded by a docile and colourless Working Committee of his own creation, awaiting opportunities of but temporary gains, or quarrelling with the Congress on the one hand and some of his colleagues in the League on the other, over issues of petty prestige, or nursing unsophisticated Muslim masses on slogans of a brand of Pakistan, the full and numerous implications of which, I have reason to believe, he and his Working Committee have neither studied nor attempted to grasp. . . .

" I venture to submit to Mr. Jinnah for his very earnest consideration that his present politics will decidedly lead to civil war, which every sensible Muslim should endeavour to avoid."

The above statement needs no comment. The Congress was dying for a settlement with the League—and its

THE LAST EFFORT

earnestness and sincerity could never be questioned as it was on the brink of launching a mass struggle against the government and would have given anything to establish communal harmony so as to make the mass movement representative of all communities and bring the League Muslims' sympathy to it.

Maulana Azad at the August session of the A.I.C.C., reviewing the efforts made by the Congress to settle with the League from time to time, observed with regret that Mr. Jinnah had banged the door against settlement every time it was put to him by Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and himself.

At the A.I.C.C. meeting, the Congress reiterated its acceptance of the principle of self-determination and favoured a plebiscite to ascertain the view of the Muslims on the issue of Pakistan. It adopted a resolution favouring a federation with maximum powers vested in the federating units, including the residuary powers, and once again the Congress pledged itself to the protection of political, social, economic, cultural and religious interests of the Muslims and other minorities.

And Mahatma Gandhi in his epic address to that last and historic session of the A.I.C.C., in despair, declared : "The Congress has agreed to submitting all differences to an impartial tribunal and to abide by its decision. If even this fairest of proposals is unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence."

After this will and testament, the Congress went into the wilderness. Short of committing suicide, the Congress has done everything to satisfy and placate the League. The Congress has undergone a sort of strip-tease act, divesting itself of every piece of ideological clothing and long cherished convictions and principles to oblige the League.

But Mr. Jinnah wants the head of the Congress on a charger—nothing less.

Mr. Jinnah characterised the Congress resolution on mass struggle as "a gambler's throw" and as "a challenge to Muslim India," "whose one and only object is, by hook

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

or crook, to bring about a situation by means of which the Pakistan scheme will not only be ruled out from discussion, but finally destroyed and set at rest. Muslim India cannot remain mere spectators in the face of the situation."*

The next meeting of the Muslim League Working Committee, after the August 7th plunge of the Congress, was convened on August 20th. Even now it was not too late to retrieve the situation, and all India looked to Mr. Jinnah and the League Working Committee to rise to the occasion and play their part in averting a catastrophe.

On the eve of this meeting, the *Statesman* of Calcutta, made a fervent appeal to Mr. Jinnah to give a lead to the country. "It (League Working Committee) meets at a critical time and Mr. Jinnah has it in his power to render India and the Allies an inestimable service," wrote that paper. It reminded Mr. Jinnah that the Congress had asserted that if effective powers were given to an Indian government, the Congress was quite prepared to let the Muslim League form that government, and wrote, "What should be tested is the genuineness or otherwise of the Congress offer. This, on its face value, is one of co-operation with the Muslim League in the task of forming a real 'win-the-war' government." The paper concluded, "If Mr. Jinnah will offer to attempt this task, he may deliver us all from grave danger. He has it in his power to give India peace, heal her internal quarrels, and help Great Britain and the Allies to defeat an enemy which seeks to destroy us all."†

The Muslim League Working Committee, when it met on August 20, disappointed the *Statesman* as well as the rest of the country by treading along the same old worn-out rut—if truth be told, it is incapable of vision and imagination. The League deplored the decision of the All-India Congress Committee to launch an "open rebellion in

* Mr. Jinnah's interview to the Foreign Press, July 24, 1942.

† The *Statesman's* editorial recalling the Congress "sporting offer," wrote, "Mr. Jinnah's reply expressed firstly only incredulity, and secondly, the assumption that, if the offer were genuine, it meant that power was to be vested in the Muslim League and a Muslim Raj set up by the British with Congress consent. He appeared indeed to be asking for the Muslims what he has accused the Congress of aiming at for the Hindus, and has condemned them for doing."

THE LAST EFFORT

pursuance of their objective of establishing Congress Hindu domination in India.....a movement directed not only to coerce the British Government into handing over power to a Hindu oligarchy.....but also to force the Muslims to submit and surrender to Congress terms and dictation."

But while there is life, there is hope! The League had exhorted the Muslims to keep aloof from 'the Congress movement, and then Mr. Jinnah had declared that the League was ready to join any effort to form a provisional government at the Centre provided all parties, including the Congress and the British Government undertook to give effect to partition of India if the Muslims in a referendum demanded it.

Almost for the first time, the Qaid-e-azam had deigned to talk in terms of a unitary government at the Centre, albeit *ad hoc*. Was he at last in a mood for a working arrangement—a compromise? Nationalist India clutched at this what they imagined to be a favourable gesture, even as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji, the liberal-minded Working President of the Hindu Mahasabha, now made his debut on the stage of Hindu-Muslim negotiations, on which many a great performer had played his part and worn his heels thin and faded out. However, no better fate awaited this Bengali patriot. While he was cold-shouldered by his own Hindu Mahasabha colleagues, Dr. Mookerji received a cooler reception from Mr. Jinnah. And he made his exit.

And, then, entered, undaunted, to the accompaniment of fanfare of press statements, the "die-hard" gentleman with the dark glasses, from Madras, with his characteristic optimism and bursting energy. He had his proposals ready; they were partly published and partly confidentially communicated to the Qaid-e-Azam. And the press was inundated with his statements and "dope". C. R. declared to the Muslims that they could have separate sovereign states if a referendum resulted in such a decision. In the same breath, he assured the Hindu Mahasabhaites that Pakistan did not mean immediate division of the country,

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

and, at all events, it was not meant to cut away the whole of Bengal and the Punjab from the rest of India. Mr. Jinnah immediately cut him short and insisted that Pakistan meant nothing if it did not mean independent sovereign Muslim states in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India. The Qaid-e-Azam then declared that nothing short of unqualified commitment to the principle of separation would satisfy him.

And the gentleman with the dark glasses from the South gradually faded out from the stage.

By the end of the year, the Congress was chased out of the surface of the earth. And the year 1943 opened with Mr. Jinnah's ambition almost realised—however temporarily : the Indian political arena was cleared of the Congress and Mr. Jinnah was bestriding it like a Colossus.

Besides Assam, he had now wangled out a League ministry, at last, in Sind, thanks to the obliging Governor of that Province. In Bengal, too, the Fazlul Huq thorn on his side had been kindly plucked for him by Governor Sir John Herbert and a League ministry constituted. The League pursued this success by manoeuvring a ministry of its own in the North-West Frontier province.

With the League at the peak of its glory and power, and Mr. Jinnah voted on all hands the most powerful political leader of the day in the country, with his sworn enemy, the Congress, down for the count, could the country look to this one-time nationalist and astute politician to cast away his destructive weapons and, for once, take up constructive ones and give the country a wholesome lead ?

9. THE CROWNING FOLLY

THE year 1943 found the country dazed and reeling under a horrible nightmare. 60,229 persons were in jail; 26,000 convicted; 940 killed; 1,630 wounded.* The Government campaign against the Congress at home and abroad was in full swing. The Congress was down, and now the Government was determined to wipe it out of the face of the earth.

In such an atmosphere of dejection and depression, Mahatma Gandhi, lying restless and tormented in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona, threw a bombshell on the country by announcing a twenty-one day fast. It was a moral protest to the Viceroy and God against the injustice heaped on the Congress and the Mahatma himself.

The Mahatma launched on the fast on February 10. All India, nay, the world was stirred by the development at the remote Aga Khan Palace, in Poona. Cables from America and Britain poured in addressed to the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi to avert a calamity.

In India, five-hundred public men—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Indian Christians, Parsis, Europeans, businessmen, zamindars, communists, even English missionaries—met in Delhi and prayed Government and God to intercede and save the Mahatma's life for India and the world.† It was a unique and poignant spectacle, this public meeting—never had so many representative leaders, of so many schools of thought, religion and colour, met in one place to demonstrate their profound feeling on a matter.

At that fateful moment—February 20—away in Poona, in the Palace-prison, the Mahatma's lamp of life was

* Sir Reginald Maxwell, Home Member, Government of India, gave these figures to the Central Assembly on February 12, 1943.

† The Meeting passed the following resolution: "This conference, representative of different communities and interests of India, gives expression to the universal desire of the people of this country that in the interest of the future of India and of international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally. The conference views with gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. The conference urges Government to release Mahatma Gandhi forthwith."

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

flickering. The bulletin issued by the physicians attending on Gandhiji that day read : "Mahatma Gandhi's condition has changed considerably for the worse. His condition is very grave."

In Delhi, presiding over the public meeting, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, that elder statesman of India, solemnly cautioned the people of India : "We may expect the worst any moment. I implore you to be calm and unruffled."

When the Government turned a deaf ear, the entire country, in despair, turned to prayer. The Metropolitan of India, Rev. Dr. West-Cott himself led an appeal for prayers countrywide, in churches, temples, mosques and synagogues, taking for his text the famous sentence "More things are wrought by prayer than man dreams of."

Three members—including one Parsi—resigned from the Viceroy's Executive Council, disagreeing with the Government's policy and refusal to release the Mahatma.

All the world was stirred and tense with anxiety and expectancy. But not a muscle moved on the frigid face of Mr. Jinnah, who, on the other hand, mouthed, parrot-like, the arrogant slogan "Withdraw the August resolution and then come to me"—a pathetic carbon-copy of Government's barren formula.

Declining the invitation to the Delhi public meeting, Mr. Jinnah perversely insisted that no change was apparent on the part of Mahatma Gandhi in the "attitude and stand taken by him last August *vis-a-vis* the League except a reiteration of his oft-repeated political demand having for its sanction the threat of resort to mass civil disobedience." "Now he has undertaken this dangerous fast with a view to enforce that demand, which, if conceded or agreed to under such coercive method, would destroy the Muslim demand and involve complete sacrifice of the vital and paramount interests of Muslim India," said the Qaid-e-Azam.

This petty-fogging, bargaining spirit jarred on the tense atmosphere charged with urgency and gravity of the situation. This narrow, truculent, vengeful attitude

THE CROWNING FOLLY

proved galling and revolting to all Indians. Many a Muslim—even Muslim Leaguer—frantically wrote to him and to the press urging him to associate himself with the Delhi public meeting and recalled the Mahatma's past services and sacrifices in the cause of the Muslims of India and to the country and the world as a whole.

In that great, memorable moment in India's history, had Mr. Jinnah risen to the occasion and shown a generous spirit and a magnanimity of heart, it would have electrified the atmosphere. With national unity forged under the emotional stress of the moment and the cordial accommodating atmosphere generated by the occasion, a generous solution of the communal problem to the satisfaction of all could have been easily hammered out.

But Mr. Jinnah stood in the way—Mr. Jinnah did not and does not want a solution—and the country missed the bus !

That was the last opportunity afforded to the country, but Mr. Jinnah failed the country—for, he alone was in a position to revolutionise the political situation in the country.

With the banging of the door against that opportunity, Mr. Jinnah has bolted and barred all doors round him as well as plugged any chinks and holes, and made his fortress impregnable and foolproof against any assault or battery of negotiators for a settlement.

Does Mr. Jinnah realise the tremendous mischief wrought by such a wilfully callous gesture, such vengeful attitude and such offensive tactics ? He is driving the iron into the soul of nationalist Indians—and the Hindus, particularly. He is making the future settlement of the communal problem more difficult. None has contributed more to strengthen the Hindu Mahasabha than Mr. Jinnah —today the Hindu Mahasabha has been converted by Mr. Jinnah into a haven and platform for disillusioned and embittered Hindu nationalists.

“ You want to kill the Congress which is the goose that lays the golden eggs. If you distrust the Congress, you may

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

rest assured that there is to be perpetual war between the Hindus and the Muslims, and the country will be doomed to continued warfare and bloodshed. If such warfare is to be our lot, I shall not live to witness it."

This was the grim, final warning given to Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League by Mahatma Gandhi at that historic August meeting of the A.I.C.C. Will' the Muslim community pay heed to it ?

Now, after all this moral, material and psychological damage wrought to the Indian people and India, what has Mr. Jinnah gained in return ?

"For, what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?"

Let us draw a balance sheet of Mr. Jinnah's new *avatar* :—

Credit side—(1) Mr. Jinnah has extracted two promises from the British Government—that the whole question of constitutional adjustments in India will be considered *de novo* (which scraps the federal part of the Government of India Act, 1935, in particular, which was objected to by the League) and that no constitution shall be devised without the consent and approval of the League.

(2) The concession in the Cripps proposals of territorial self-determination with the right of refusal to join in an Indian union (which may be interpreted as a long way towards Pakistan and the two-nations theory).

Be it noted that British Government spokesmen only exploit the Pakistan slogan to their own purpose, without committing themselves to it, notwithstanding repeated demands of the League for a declaration in favour of Pakistan as conceived by its Lahore resolution.

(3) Weaning a number of Muslims from the Congress.

(4) Muslim League ministries established in five provinces—though in four of them, Bengal, Sind, N.-W. F. and Assam, they are built on shifting sands and with the aid of the artificial props of the Governors ; while in the Punjab, the Unionist ministry prefers to be Unionist ministry despite Mr. Jinnah's *fatwas*.

THE CROWNING FOLLY

(5) The League has reached the peak of its strength, power and influence—and Mr. Jinnah has built a mansion for the League with the ransom (money) collected from the Government and the Congress.

Debit side—(1) A permanent stalemate in the politics of India, with India's political progress completely blocked so far as it can be wrested from the British Government.

(2) Never was communal tension deeper and more bitter in the history of India than it is today.

(3) Premium put on disruptionism in Indian politics.

(4) A feeling of frustration abroad and the apprehension driven home that the greatest obstacle to Swaraj is the Muslim League and not British imperialism.

(5) Frustrated and desperate Congress has changed its creed from "Hindu-Muslim unity first and then Swaraj" to "Swaraj first and then unity"—even Mahatma Gandhi has been compelled to talk in terms of risking anarchy in India with a view to cut the vicious circle of Indian politics.

The only test and value of this balance sheet is the answer to the question : How has the lot of the Muslims in the mass—whose interests the League claims to protect—been bettered ? What is their prospect for the future ?

The answer to that question falls into two parts :—Future—while they are given the sentimental toy of "Pakistan" to play with, their economic condition is threatened to be worsened both in Pakistan and Hindustan territories, while Muslims in Hindustan territory will be politically reduced to a zero.

That section of the Muslims who need protection most will be left to fend for themselves in the Hindu-majority provinces, after being injected with a psychology of hate against the Hindu majority with which they are surrounded ; while those Muslims who do not need protection at all get a bankrupt state to call their own, while they are bled white to keep it going.

The immediate present—the communal poison injected into Muslim minds and its reaction on their Hindu neighbours has made their day to day life a psychological

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

misery. Economically, they stand the risk of losing a lot, as most of them are poor and belong to the working class and therefore in the employment of Hindu landlord and industrialist.

It is for that educated, enlightened and sober middle class among the Muslim community—a section which is fast growing with the spread of education amongst them—to ponder these aspects and consequences of the path the League has chosen for itself and the Muslim masses as a whole, and decide what is best for the community. For it is this important middle class that will have to shoulder the burden of the administration of the future Pakistan, and thus reap the whirlwind !

10. COMMUNAL ELECTORATES

THIS chapter is essentially addressed to the foreigner. There is hardly any need to tell an Indian what are communal electorates or their evils—he knows them too well. But a foreigner who has often read and heard of “communal kitchen,” “communal ownership of land” or the “Paris commune” is confused and perplexed when in India he hears of “communal electorates” and “communal virus.”

At the outset the foreigner must understand that the word “communal” has a unique connotation in India—“communalism” connotes a religious community aspiring for an exclusive political status in the body politic of the country.

“But what is wrong with communal electorates?” asks an American, genuinely perplexed.

You explain to him, “Communal electorate means, for example, only Muslims can vote for a Muslim.”

But he persists, “But what’s wrong about it. That’s so all over. In the States, in practice, generally a Catholic votes for a Catholic, and Protestant for a Protestant.”

You take a deep breath, and ask him, “Do you really want to know all about it? Will you have the patience to go through with it while I explain to you what’s communal electorate and why it is bad?”

Then you offer him a seat and a mug of beer and you begin the strange story of communal electorates in India. But before that, you explain to him what is communal electorate.

You began by telling him that under communal electorate, for example, only Muslims could vote for a Muslim. But he could not understand you, and he wanted to know what’s wrong about it. That was so all over the world. He told you, “Even in the States, in practice,

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

generally a Catholic votes for a Catholic." You pursue this remark of his, and continue the argument :

"But in your States, if a Catholic wants to vote for a Protestant because he is convinced that the Protestant is better equipped for the job, could the Catholic do it?"

The American would proudly tell you, "Certainly. In the States we have freedom of thought and vote. Anybody is free to vote for anybody irrespective of his religion."

Then you gently tell him, "In India, that is prevented by law. Here, a Muslim must vote for a Muslim, but he cannot vote for a non-Muslim."

"Oh, that's rather bad," he concedes, but still he cannot understand why so much fuss about it !

The pity of it is, India has the unique distinction of being the only country in the world where there are communal electorates, and therefore the rest of the world cannot easily appreciate our point of view. Hence you have patiently to demonstrate to them what is wrong and vicious about communal electorates. So you start :

"Suppose you, in the States, had communal electorates. Suppose under the United States' constitution, the electorate of the country was divided into three "communal"—or, much better still "religious"—watertight compartments, so that seats in your Congress were divided on a religious basis, between Catholics, Protestants and Jews. And it was laid down by law that only Catholics could vote for Catholics, Protestants for Protestants and Jews for Jews. In practice, how will the elections be conducted under communal electorates ? The Catholics will tend to vote only to "good" Catholics as against "bad" Catholics—for the voters' choice is limited only to Catholics. The various candidates will vie with each other in being "good" Catholics. Now, you see, there is a difference between a "good" Catholic and a "good" American or even a "good" man. Thus naturally, the election appeals of these candidates will run on the lines of proving that each one of them is "better" Catholic than his rival.

"In such a set-up, the candidate who makes specific

COMMUNAL ELECTORATES

“communal” promises to his electorate stands a better chance of election than the candidate who makes vague “national” promises and dares think in terms of the whole nation—for the latter immediately becomes a “bad” Catholic!

“Thus naturally the claims of the Catholic community are put in juxtaposition to the claims of, say, the Protestant community or the Jews—a fertile field is presented for “communal” jealousies and rivalries which fertilise the seeds of civil war.

“Again to illustrate the point, a Jewish candidate (the Jews are a minority in America as elsewhere) who promises more jobs for the Jews in the administration of the country or more synagogues, stands a better chance of election than his brother Jew who airily talks of intercommunal unity and national good and social and economic reform. Thus finally, it is inevitable that Congress would be packed with narrow-minded communalists who are there to fight for, defend and promote the claims and interests of their respective communities at the expense of a sister community—and in this scramble, the national interests go to the wall.

“That is what is happening in India. A nationalist Muslim, for example, finds it extremely difficult to compete with his communalist rival at an election. For, whereas the communalist Muslim promises to his communal electorate “more jobs for the community,” “more mosques” and “more Muslim schools” and even “an independent sovereign Muslim state free from the Hindu majority tyranny,” the nationalist Muslim’s appeal is colourless to the same communal electorate—all that he can talk to them of is the dire need for communal unity, the country’s freedom and social and economic reforms—and all that falls flat on them.”

But, perhaps, there is an Englishman in the company, and he interrupts you and exclaims : “Ah, there you are ! That only proves the political backwardness of your electorate. Your voter is still immature—what he needs is political education to attain the wisdom to decide what is good

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

for himself and his country. Why blame others for what is your own drawback?"

Be patient with the Englishman, and gently ask him : "Is your English voter what you would call politically educated and mature to choose the right kind of representative for your Parliament ?"

And the Englishman would gushingly tell you : "Certainly, he is. That's why British democracy is the envy of the world."

Now, don't dispute his latter statement—for that is irrelevant to the issue. But still be patient with him, and softly reply to him : "But, was it not the same politically mature voter who allowed himself to be tragically fooled during the long, disgraceful Thirties, when Baldwin and Chamberlain and their 'national' government led him up the garden path, while he applauded them—while all the time the rest of the world called him the greatest muff ever born who would blindly follow any carrot dangled before his nose.....Where was then the politically mature English voter ?"

And then add, hastily,—for you might have hurt his pride and feelings : "That's the voter all over. Leaders manufacture and manipulate public opinion and voters are but creatures of the political machine and politicians. And the English voter is no exception, notwithstanding his political wisdom."

Now having disposed of this interruption, we go back to the main argument.....

In these circumstances, a young Muslim with ambitions for a public career, weighs the possibilities of a successful political career: he has seen that nationalist politics would mean all kicks and no sixpence—it is a crown of thorns, at best, and average man does not like thorns. But if he chose communal politics, all the plums of public life would be his. If he is capable, he could even aspire to be a premier of a province, and perhaps, a knighthood in the bargain—and no jailgoing and political persecution !

Hence, also the phenomenon of Muslim undergraduates

COMMUNAL ELECTORATES

who are out-and-out nationalists, when they go out into public life, turn communalist and outdo each other in "saving" and "defending" their community.

This is the vicious circle of communal electorates.

Morley was of the firm conviction that communal electorates were antinational and antidemocratic, but his colleague Minto would introduce them in India for that very reason. Montague was equally vehement in their condemnation but pleaded helplessness in the face of the agreement between the Hindus and Muslims to have them (the Lucknow Pact, under which the two communities agreed to separate electorates in India). And Ramsay Macdonald intensified communal electorates in India for the opposite reason, namely, lack of agreement between the two communities ! Meantime, the Simon Commission, too, disapproved of them, but nobody in Whitehall paid any heed to this part of the Simon Report.

But it is to be noted that the conscience of none of these architects of India's political destiny was easy about this aspect of it.

It would be illuminating and instructive to turn to the experience of the only other country in the world where communal electorates were tried and had to be abandoned within a period of eight years. The 1920 constitution in Ceylon introduced the system of communal representation. In that island the main rivalry was between the Tamil (the minority community) and Sinhalese (majority community) professional classes. Besides there were Ceylon Muslims and Burghers, the equivalent of the Anglo-Indians in Ceylon.

The experience of the working of communal electorates in eight years showed the same communal reactions as in India. With further political concessions in sight, those who already had separate seats demanded that their number should be increased ; at the same time, other communities, castes, religions and special interests came forward demanding separate representation. While those communities already enjoying separate representation, failed to

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

be satisfied with the measure as an adequate protection to their interests.

The Donoughmore Commission which reported on Ceylon's constitution in 1928, however, firmly demanded the abandonment of communal electorates in that island. The report significantly observed that the system of communal representation had "exercised an influence on society wholly pernicious in that it has created an ever-widening breach between the communities and has tended to obscure the national interests in the clash of rival races or religions."*

Within the Muslim community itself the Malays claimed separate representation from the Moors. The commission cited this as an instance of "the disintegrating effect" of communal representation on the Muslims. The Donoughmore report categorically denounced the policy of artificial protection and redistribution. "Only by its abolition will it be possible for the various diverse communities to develop together a true national unity"†. At the same time, it suggested that the real safeguards lay in the fairness and commonsense of the majority of members. "If the legislature were anxious to oppress the Burghers in any way, it would not be prevented by the presence of two Burgher communal members,"‡ it pertinently observed.

"But if the British can know an evil when they see it in Ceylon, why can't the same British recognise and eradicate it in India?"

"Ask me another!"

* Donoughmore Report p. 106.

† Ibid p. 99.

‡ Ibid p. 95.

11. THE APPLE OF DISCORD

PERPETUATING political disunity in India has been a vital tenet of British rule in India. He who denies this is either woefully ignorant or wilfully blind.

Woman, according to Goldsmith, has two faces: one, that is made up before a mirror, to show to the world; the other, to present to her husband and to sleep in. So has British imperialism. Mill, Burke, Macaulay, Morley, Montague and Cripps in our own time, are exhibited in the shop-window for the world to gaze at and admire, and for Vincent Smiths, Rushbrook Williams and Couplands to write "canned" histories of India with "Our Solemn Indian Trust" for their text. While the steady, moving finger of imperialism moves on—whether it is Morley's, Montague's, Hoare's, Zetland's, Amery's or Cripps'.

"The English have shown a marked talent for combining successful imperialism with individual fulminations against imperialist oppression," remarks Malcolm Muggeridge in his book "*The Thirties*" apropos the Indian problem.

This is not to say that those great Liberals were dishonest or insincere. It only proves that imperialism—however much you may camouflage it with grandiose phrases—is congenitally evil, and that there is no halfway house about it. Either you have to reject it or accept it. Any attempt at humanising imperialism must inevitably end up in "imperialising" humans. That, at any rate, is the universal experience.

Morley inveighed against communal electorate as the very negation of democracy, but was responsible for its introduction in the body politic of India. Montague was equally vehement in his denunciation of communal electorate, but the reforms associated with his name, drove the very vicious principle deeper in the Indian constitutional structure. Ramsay Macdonald overflowed with sympathy

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

for India's political aspirations, and in his "Awakening of India" wrote bitterly, "The Mahomedan leaders are inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials, and these officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and of malice aforethought, sowed discord between the Hindu and Mahomedan communities by showing the Muslims special favours." But his infamous Communal Award invented new minorities to offer them communal electorates—even women got separate electorates! The socialist, "pro-Indian," "friend of the Congress", Cripps went the limit and sanctioned the splitting up of India into as many separate, independent nation states as one would fancy!

Thus the Minto-Morley Reforms split the electorate into two; the Montford Reforms broke it up into ten parts; the Macdonald Award further split it into seventeen parts; and Cripps set the seal on the nefarious plot to immobilise and incapacitate the Indian nation, by conceding territorial self-determination and the right to secede to constituent units.

The luckiest thing that could have happened to the British in all their history is that their infiltration into India should have coincided with the period of disintegration of the great two-hundred year old Moghul Empire on the one hand, and the eclipse of French imperialist ambitions in India, thanks to the birth of the republic in France, on the other. These two factors left the Indian rose-garden open and naked for the plucking of the British, who, of course, needed no special encouragement to take advantage of them.

At this period of history, India was passing through the transition of confusion that is inevitable when a strong two-hundred year old empire disintegrates. Various powers and personalities were contending with each other to fill the void created by the collapse of the Moghuls. Thus the natural and historical process of survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weak had already set in. Ahmad Shah Abdali's sack of Delhi and the defeat of Scindia at Panipat had only served to check the Mahrattas' march

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

further northwards, but in peninsular India the Mahratta supremacy was still intact, though further south, Hyderali, and, later, Tippu, were carving a kingdom of their own. In the Punjab, the Sikhs under Ranjitsingh were unchallenged. But in between, scattered all over, petty rajas and chieftains were fighting each other to assert their newly won freedom from the Moghul master and expand their influence at the expense of each other.

There was, however, a silver lining to this dark period in Indian history. The process of assimilation of the Muslims into the native soil, which had far advanced in the benign reign of Akbar, though somewhat checked under Aurangzeb, was quickened by the conditions of political confusion in the country. Territorial loyalties owed to territorial rulers—irrespective of religion—were forged on Hindus and Muslims alike, and territorial patriotism, the precursor of national patriotism, was born. Common economic and political interests to defend and preserve against the onslaughts of outsiders rubbed out the religious angularities of Hindus and Muslims, and a community of interest was cultivated as they fought side by side for their common patriotism.

Thus Muslim soldiers fought for Maharashtra, and Hindu soldiers for the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan. Every attempt by the Moghuls in the past to subdue the Shia kingdom of the Deccan had been resisted by mixed Hindu and Muslim forces under the banner of those Shia states. Thus, in peninsular India, at any rate, homogeneity between Hindu and Muslim subjects had been achieved much earlier. Fostered by the religious tolerance of the Shia Muslim rulers of the Deccan and called upon, from time to time, jointly to defend their common homes from the Moghul invaders from the North, common sentiment and patriotism had already developed.

This process of evolving a common Indian nation out of the Hindu and Muslim components was completed with the advent of the British foreigner. The unscrupulous methods of the East India Company officials and their lust

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

for power and empire-building—and the refusal of the British to get absorbed into the Indian people, unlike his predecessors, the Moghuls and other earlier invaders—gave the finishing touches to the political unity of the Indian nation, as the Hindus and Muslims alike found that they had everything in common to preserve and defend against the European foreigners—who after two hundred years of their stay in this country, still remain foreigners !

Emboldened by the political confusion and demoralisation in the country, the East India Company embarked on a campaign of political expansion. Beginning with cautious “infiltration” tactics, they meddled in local rivalries; stoked up political jealousies; played one petty ruler against another; supported a pretender to a throne here and in the bargain pocketed some territory and lot of influence; bribed a ruler to fight his neighbour there and derived material benefit therefrom; and, then, when necessary fought open battles and proved their military superiority and struck awe in the local chieftains, which enhanced their prestige. And thus they took a hand in the shaping of India’s political destinies.

Soon, the East India Company found themselves strong enough to impose their own terms on local rulers, and, then, its suzerainty on vast territories. And the British threw off the mask and started on a career of unscrupulous annexations of local territories and kingdoms on the slightest or no pretext.

Now, nothing could forge stronger ties of common patriotism in a local populace than a foreigner imposing his arbitrary rule with force of arms or the shady means of “fishing in troubled waters.” The mismanagement, corruption and arrogance of the irresponsible, power-drunk officials of the East India Company, the oppression of the local population and the blatant campaign of annexations of territories from Indian chiefs, endowed to Indian patriotism the positive quality of political consciousness born of an acute sense of common grievance against the foreign ruler.

As the heel of oppression weighed heavier, Indians—

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

Muslim and Hindu, prince and subject, soldier and peasant—woke up to realities—there was now a new, strong, ruthless—impersonal and therefore terrifying—power, imposing its even rule on Hindus and Muslims alike; that power had robbed them of their political independence, and, in short, they were now subjects of a foreign ruler, for the first time in their history—the term “subject” now had a different, humiliating, repugnant connotation, when the ruler did not belong to their own race—and was not touched by and refused to identify himself with their weal and woe.

The result of this tremendous political awakening in the people of India—princes, public men and soldiers—was the Indian Mutiny of 1857—the first organised rebellion on the part of Indians against the foreign yoke.

The Mutiny was, of course, crushed. But it also opened the eyes of the British Parliament at home to the appalling mismanagement of affairs in their Indian empire by the corrupt officials of the East India Company. A thorough investigation into the conditions in India was undertaken with a view to finding out the causes of the Mutiny and to prevent recurrence thereof and to put the Indian empire on a sound basis.

One of the results of the investigations was the alarming discovery of the growing political consciousness among the Indians and a sense of nationalism and the sentiment of patriotism. This was a definite menace to the British Empire. Hence all energy and effort of British imperialist statesmen were concentrated on eradicating this menace.

The Indian Army was tackled first. Before the Peel Commission, witnesses pointed out that “in the lines, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh were mixed so that each and all lost to some extent their racial prejudice and became inspired with one common sentiment.” It was, therefore, proposed by Sir John Lawrence* that in organising the Indian Army care should be taken “to preserve that distinctiveness which is valuable and while it lasts, makes the Muslim of one country despise, fear or dislike the Muslim

* Later Lord Lawrence, who took prominent part in suppressing the Mutiny and for some time was the Viceroy of India.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

of another; a corps should in future be provincial and adhere to geographical limits within which differences and rivalries are strongly marked.....by the system thus indicated two great evils are avoided: firstly, that community of feeling throughout the native army and that mischievous political activity and intrigue which results from association with other races and travel in other Indian provinces.”* This proposal was supported by many military men before the Peel Commission and was recommended by it as the principle of Indian army policy.

At the same time, the Indian army underwent a radical change in composition. In the pre-Mutiny period the Punjabi and particularly the Sikh was kept out of what was then known as the Bengal Army, and it mainly consisted of Brahmins and Kshatriyas of the Ganges basin. Similarly the Madras and Bombay Armies were manned by local elements. In fact, there was a clear injunction that “the number of Punjabis in a regiment should never exceed 200. nor more than ten of them to be Sikhs.”* The Mutiny had been suppressed largely with the aid of the Punjabi and Sikh sepoys. Now the Punjabi and Sikh sepoys reaped their reward—and the “martial and non-martial races” myth was invented, which punished all classes and castes that were involved in the Mutiny by being branded “non-martial.”

This was the first conscious and deliberate measure taken by the British in India to prevent the growth of “common sentiment” among Indians and “that mischievous political activity and intrigue which results from association with other races” and to “preserve the distinctiveness” among the sepoys by quarantining them from each other on territorial and communal basis.

Meantime, irate Iris of British Imperialism had sneaked in by the back-door and slipped the Apple of Discord of communal electorate in the body politic of India. Even though the Indian Councils Act of 1892 made no specific provision for speical representation for the Muslims

* Quoted by Mr. N. C. Choudhury in series of articles in “Modern Review,” 1930.

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

as such, in the directions issued to those charged with the duty of framing regulations as to classes and interests, Muslims were named as a class to be provided for. The idea was to wean the Muslims from the Congress.*

Thus, let it be noted, communal electorate was initiated and introduced by the British, unsought and unasked for by the Muslims themselves.

Then, in 1906, the famous Muslim Deputation, headed by the Aga Khan and inspired by that father of Muslim separatism, Sir Syed Ahmad, was got up by Lord Minto, the then Viceroy—which the late Maulana Mahomed Ali described as the “command performance”—to put forth, for the first time, the Muslim separationist and disruptionist demand of communal electorate for the Muslim community of India. And with the usual unseemly anxiety that the British Government have displayed to propitiate the Muslim community, they willingly gave all that the Muslim Deputation asked for.

In his “Recollections,” Morley cites a letter written by him to Lord Minto, in which, Pontius-Pilate-like, he washed his hands of the responsibility for the introduction of the vicious communal electorate in Indian politics. “I won’t follow you again into our Mahomedan dispute,” Morley writes. “Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was your early speech about their extra claims that first started the Muslim hare.”

That this Muslim Deputation was a “command performance” is amply proved in a letter to Nawab Mohsin-ul-mulk (dated 10th August, 1906) by Mr. Archbold, the principal of the Aligarh College, later published. Archbold, who is supposed to be the draftsman of the memorandum presented to the Viceroy by the Deputation, writes in that letter :

“Colonel Dunlop Smith, Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy, informs me that His Excellency is agreeable to receive the Muslim Deputation. He advised that a formal letter requesting a permission to wait on His Excellency be sent to him. In this connexion I would like to

* “Lord Dufferin back in 1888 had hit upon the plan with a view to wean the Muslims away from the Congress”—‘Thoughts on Pakistan’ by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

make a few suggestions. The formal letter should be sent with the signature of some representative Mussalmans. The deputation should consist of the representatives of all the provinces. The third point to be considered is the text of the address. I would here suggest that we begin with a solemn expression of loyalty. The government decision to take a step in the direction of 'self-government' should be appreciated. But our apprehension should be expressed that the principle of election, if introduced, would prove detrimental to the interest of the Muslim minority. It should be respectfully suggested that nomination or representation by religion be introduced to meet Muslim opinion. We should also say, that in a country like India due weight must be given to the views of zamindars.

"Personally I think it will be wise of the Muslims to support nomination, as the time to experiment with elections has not yet come. In election it will be very difficult for the Muslims to secure their due share. But in all these views I must be in the background. They must come from you . . . I can prepare for you the draft of the address or revise it. If it is prepared in Bombay, I can go through it as, you are aware, I know how to phrase these things in proper language. Please remember that if we want to organise a powerful movement in the short time at our disposal, we must expedite matters."

This letter is self-revealing and needs no comment. But the shady role of "Anglo-Indian officials" that Ramsay Macdonald referred to in his book "Awakening of India," quoted earlier in this chapter, is a sordid chapter in itself. In the early years of the Twentieth Century, Aligarh nursed a nest of Anglo-Indian intriguers that "converted" a nationalist and patriot like Sir Syed Ahmad to communalism; poisoned the minds of young and old Mussalmans with the narrow, anti-national communal virus, and generally played a treasonable role in trying to wean the Muslims away from nationalism and the Congress. The English principals of the Aligarh college laid down the policy for the Muslim community to follow, and later even tyrannised over the Muslims. In this nest of intriguers two names stand out—Beck and Archbold.

Beck it was who was responsible for Sir Syed's

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

“conversion” to communalism in that great Muslim’s late years of life and committed him to many reactionary pronouncements and actions. To Beck, also, goes the credit of the amazing theory—Mr. Jinnah only borrowed it from him!—that the introduction of the democratic principle was unsuited to India, and that India was not a single nation. He got up a memorial on these lines on behalf of the Muslims and obtained 20,735 signatures to it, for presentation to the British Parliament, when Charles Bradlaugh introduced a bill in Parliament with the object of conferring democratic institutions on India. It is interesting to recall how Beck took with him batches of Aligarh college students to the Jumma Masjid at Delhi on a Friday and canvassed the signatures of Muslims that went to the Mosque for prayers, who hardly knew what it was all about!

It was Beck, again, who started a purely Muslim organisation, the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India, whose objects were (1) to acquaint Englishmen in general and the government in particular with the views of the Muslim community and to protect the political rights of the Muslims; (2) to support measures that would strengthen British rule in India; (3) to spread feelings of loyalty among the people and (4) to prevent the spread of political agitation.

In a speech in England, Beck declared that while Anglo-Musilm unity was a feasible proposition, Hindu-Muslim unity was impossible. It was inconceivable because of the ineluctable antagonisms between the two communities, of historical memories, of customs and cultures! Mr. Jinnah’s speech at the famous Lahore session of the League in 1940 but reads like a carbon-copy of the speech of Beck’s delivered over fifty years ago.

Beck dominated Aligarh politics for full fifteen years, and when he died in September, 1899, the London *Times* paid him a glowing tribute, classing him with other silent empire-builders of Britain. The paper wrote:—

“An Englishman who was engaged in Empire-building

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

activities in a far off land has passed away. He died like a soldier at the post of his duty. The Muslims are a suspicious people. They opposed Mr. Beck in the beginning suspecting him to be a British spy, but his sincerity and selflessness soon succeeded in his gaining their confidence.

We have already related earlier in this chapter Archbold's role in the Minto Deputation.

Yet another blatant attempt to break the back of Indian nationalism was the enforced partition of Bengal in the teeth of popular opposition—which, however, could not stand the test of time, and had to be annulled soon after.

Lest any reader be still disposed to give the benefit of doubt to British intentions—at any rate, until very recent past—towards India, we might quote a few extracts from the revealing Diary by Lady Minto.

On May 11, 1906, Lord Morley wrote a long letter to Lord Minto, the then Viceroy of India, referring to his long conversation with the Prince of Wales. Lord Morley wrote :

“He (the Prince of Wales) talked of the National Congress rapidly becoming a great power. My own impression formed long ago and confirmed since I came to this office, is that it will mainly depend upon ourselves whether the Congress is a power for good or evil. There it is, whether we like it or not.”

Lord Minto replied :

“As to the Congress, there is much that is absolutely disloyal in the movement; and that there is danger for the future, I have no doubt. I have been thinking a good deal lately of a possible **counterpoise to the Congress aim**”*

On June 19, 1906, Lord Morley wrote again to Lord Minto as follows :

“You cannot go on governing in the same spirit; you have got to deal with the Congress party and the Congress principles, whatever you may think of them. Be sure that before long Mohammedans will throw in their lot with the Congressmen against you and so on and so forth. I do not know how true this may or may not be.”**

* Lady Minto's Diary pages 23-29.

**Ibid, page 30.

THE APPLE OF DISCORD

And Lord Minto worked to find out an effective device to keep the Congress and the Muslims asunder permanently. Four months after the exchange of these letters, on October 1, 1906, the Muslim Deputation headed by the Aga Khan, materialised, demanding separate electorates.

That day the deputation waited on the Viceroy was hailed as an eventful day, "an epoch in Indian history." That evening (October 1, 1906) Lady Minto received the following letter from an official whose name and identity are not disclosed :

"I must send your Excellency a line to say that a very big thing has happened today, a work of statesmanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the **pulling back of 62 million of people from joining the ranks of the seditious opposition.**" (black mine.)

That "work of statesmanship" has, indeed, affected India and Indian history "for many a long year"! Indians can never forget it.

And whose "brain-wave" Pakistan really is, may be revealed to posterity. For aught we know, this, too, might be a "work of statesmanship" by an empire-builder of England, who believes in the sound maxim of allowing silent deeds to speak for themselves !

12. WILFUL SABOTAGE

HAMBERLAIN appeased Hitler not so much because he feared Hitler—he had a deeper, ulterior motive ; he would play Hitler against Stalin ; he would tame the man-eater running amuck in Europe and set him to hunt and kill the monster of communism.

But, oh, for the plans of men and mice ! the man-eater turned on the hand that stroked its mane and tickled it under the ear !

The British Government played the same game in India. They fed the Muslims' insecurity complex to turn it to their own purpose—to hunt and kill Indian nationalism. They blatantly pursued their ulterior object and heaped favours on the Muslim community with scant regard for the interests of and justice to other communities.

In 1919, with the full acquiescence of the Congress under the Lucknow Pact, they gave over-representation to the Muslims in Hindu majority provinces by way of weightages, and then granted separate electorates to Muslims even in their own majority provinces, though it was obvious that separate electorates was purely a device intended to protect a minority. When it came to franchise qualifications, they were again more favourable to the Muslims than to the Hindus. To become a voter, the Muslim had to pay income-tax on Rs. 3,000 a year, while a non-Muslim on Rs. 300,000 a year. It was enough for a Muslim graduate to have a standing of three years to become a voter, while the non-Muslim was required to have thirty years standing.

Next we come to the early Thirties to record more instances of "appeasement" and British Government's anxiety to keep the Indian Minorities problem on the boil.

Mr. Jinnah's famous Fourteen Points included the demand for Muslim statutory majorities in Bengal and in the Punjab, besides insisting on weightages in Muslim minority provinces. This demand violated the very spirit

WILFUL SABOTAGE

of the Lucknow Pact jointly agreed to by the Congress and the League. The Pact gave weightages to the Muslims in certain provinces in consideration of the fact that they are in minority in those provinces. In other words, separate electorates with weightages was a measure specially devised to give a minority protection. Now such a protection was sought to be extended to Muslim majorities in Bengal and the Punjab by conceding statutory majorities under separate electorates, which would result in permanent unconvertible majorities. Under the Lucknow Pact, separate electorates were accepted for the Punjab and Bengal because the Muslims agreed to forego their majority position in those provinces.

Even the Simon Commission could not stomach this demand and was constrained to remark :

“This claim goes to the length of seeking to preserve full security for representation now provided for Muslims in six provinces and at the same time to enlarge in Bengal and the Punjab the present proportion of seats secured to the community by separate electorate to figures proportionate to unalterable majority of “general constituency” seats. We cannot go so far. The continuance of the present scale of weightage in six provinces could not—in the absence of a general agreement between the communities—equitably be combined with as great a departure from the existing allocation in Bengal and the Punjab. It would be unfair that the Muslims should retain the very considerable weightage they enjoy in six provinces, and that there should, at the same time, be imposed, in the face of Hindu and Sikh opposition, definite Muslim majority in the Punjab and Bengal, unalterable by an appeal to the electorate.”*

Nevertheless, the British Government, knowing full well the inequity and injustice of these Muslim demands, conceded them all in the notorious Communal Award given by the great “well-wisher” and socialist Premier of England, the late Ramsay MacDonald !

A striking instance of the British government’s readiness to oblige the Muslims by giving them more than they themselves asked for, is described by Dr. B. R.

* Simon Commission Report, Vol. II, page 71.

THE 'HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Ambedkar in his "Thoughts on Pakistan." Dr. Ambedkar himself was a member of the Round Table Conference. He writes :—

At the R.T.C. Sir Mohmad Shafi made two different proposals in the Minorities Sub-Committee for a communal settlement:

First, joint electorates on the condition that the rights at present enjoyed by the Muslims in the minority provinces should be continued to them; that in the Punjab and Bengal they should have joint electorates and representation on population basis; that there should be the principle of reservation of seats coupled with Mr. Mahmadali's condition (joint electorates and reserved seats with the proviso that no candidate shall be declared elected unless he secured at least 40 per cent of votes of his community and at least 5 or 10 per cent of votes of the other community).

Later, Sir Mohmad Shafi made a different offer: That the Punjab Muslims should have through communal electorate 49 per cent of the entire number of seats in the whole house, and should have the liberty to contest special constituencies which it is proposed to create in that province; in so far as minority provinces are concerned, Muslims should continue to enjoy weightage which they have at present through separate electorate, similar weightage to be given to the Hindus in Sind and Sikhs in the N.-W.F. If at any time hereafter two-thirds of the representatives of any community in any provincial legislative council or in the central legislative council desire to give up communal electorate, then thereafter the system of joint electorates should come into being."

Dr. Ambedkar points out, the difference between the two proposals was: joint electorates if accompanied by statutory majority. If statutory majority is refused, then a minority of seats with separate electorates. The British Government took the statutory majority from the first demand and separate electorate from the second demand and gave the Muslims both, when they had not asked for both !

Now for an instance of wilful sabotage of Indian moves for a Hindu-Muslim rapprochement. Riding the momentum generated by the Poona Pact, which brought the scheduled classes back into the general electorates following Mahatma Gandhi's "Fast unto death," a unity conference was held at

WILFUL SABOTAGE

Allahabad. At this conference, excellent progress was made towards an agreement and great hopes were roused in the country of a satisfactory settlement between the two communities. Agreement was arrived at on two important issues. It was agreed that the Muslims should have 32 per cent. of the British Indian representation in the Central Legislature, and secondly, that Sind should be separated from the Bombay Presidency and made into an independent Governor's province. Certain concessions to the Hindu minority in the new province were also decided upon and it was further agreed that Sind was to receive no subvention from Central revenues. The only point that remained was the proportion of representation of the two communities in Bengal.

This psychological moment was grasped by Sir Samuel Hoare, the then Secretary of State for India, to announce at the Third Round Table Conference that His Majesty's Government had decided to allot 33-1/3 per cent. of British Indian seats to Muslims in the Central Legislature and not only to constitute Sind into a new Governor's province but to provide it with adequate financial aid from the Central revenues. And nothing was said about any safeguards for the Hindu minority in the new province. The announcement quashed the deliberations of the unity conference, since the British Government had granted to the Muslims much more than what they had voluntarily agreed to accept.

The latest instance of pandering to the Muslim League was the Cripps proposals. When all India, including large sections of Muslims, demonstrated their opposition to vivisecting India into many independent states, the Cripps proposals, if they did anything, first endeavoured to satisfy the Muslim League on its disruptionist move.

Meantime, British official pronouncements on India oscillate between the inviolable "geographical unity of India,"* "Hundred and fifty years of good work of the

* Speaking at the session of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, at Calcutta, on December 17, 1942, Lord Linlithgow declared, "Geographically India is one and I consider it even more important than in the past that this unity be preserved in so far as it may be built up with full justice for the legitimate claims of minorities, large and small.....Can India play her part effectively at the international discussions with other parts of the empire if she is to speak with two voices?"

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

British in India" and satisfaction of "important elements in the national life of the country" and "no advance possible without communal agreement."

All the time, communal disruptionism, however, is sedulously watered by Mr. Amery and the Viceroys with the parrot-like repetition of the meaningless, misleading statement: "the majority community must recognise the rights and safeguard the interests of the minorities"—it is false and misleading because it is not true that the majority community has refused to recognise the rights and to safeguard the interests of the minorities, and secondly, there are no "minorities"—thank God, no!—that demand "satisfaction," but only one minority, the Muslims of the League school, who are indeed a "problem," but of purely British creation.

Yet, Lord Cranbourne, the Dominions Secretary, delivered another homily at the Pilgrims lunch to Viscount Wavell, Viceroy-designate, in September, 1943. He declaimed to the world—that was, indeed, meant for world consumption—"Surely, we may say the main stumbling block has not been that the British are unable to agree, but that the Indians are unable to agree among themselves. The main responsibility lies with those sections of opinion in India who have not yet realised that true unity means not domination by any one race or creed, but the subordination of all sectional interests to the greater interest of the whole"!

Even so has Muslim separatism been stoked up, and to then narrow-minded reactionary Muslim the conviction driven home that his community is the "most favoured" community of the British rulers in India, and therefore he has everything to lose if the British rulers get out of India. For him there is thus created a vested interest in the perpetuation of the British empire in India.

And, then, one good turn deserves another!

13. THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

IN the year 1906, the Indian National Congress was just coming of age. At 20 that institution was full of youthful—and, then, yet unembittered—idealism and impatience. It had rapidly grown from the stage of thanking the “merciful dispensation of Providence* for the British advent in India, to the stage when it lisped the infectious language of freedom, democracy and nationalism.

Representative government was its immediate goal, and its political ambition and model was the attainment of a “form of government similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the British Empire.”

The Englishmen who had godfathered the Congress at its birth, did not intend it to grow so fast, nor even tread the path of self-government†. And the Raj watched the Congress doings with increasing misgivings and even distrust.

And, then, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the father of Muslim separatism, raised his discordant voice to warn his fellow-Muslims that representative government in India meant “majority rule.” And in that year of Grace, 1906, was born the Muslim League; that fateful day in wintry December was unfurled the flag of Muslim separatism in India.

The Muslim community as a whole had looked on with suspicion and even hostility at the new-fangled ways introduced by the British rulers, and refused to participate in the material benefits conferred by the new regime. It kept aloof from the newly introduced western education. Another handicap to the Muslims’ progress was the introduction of English as the court language in place of

*Even the Liberal Lord Morley did not visualise such a consummation for India. In a speech in the House of Lords, he derided the idea that “whatever is good in the way of self-government for Canada must be good for India,” as a “gross and dangerous sophism.”

† Mr. Subramania Ayer used these words to describe the British advent in India, moving a resolution at the first session of Indian National Congress at Bombay in 1885.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Persian. Meantime, under British rule, the Muslims also lost the privileges of the governing class that they had enjoyed formerly. And thus they were fast sinking back into a backward community, while the memories of the spacious times when the Moghuls ruled the country persistently lingered.

At the beginning the English heartily reciprocated this distrust. The Indian Mutiny had been, wrongly, interpreted by them as mainly a conspiracy on the part of the Muslims to recapture power. Besides, their imperialistic instincts prompted them to patronise the Hindus as against the Muslims, the then governing community. The Hindus were not slow to take advantage of this patronage and took to western education with zeal and manned the clerical staff of the government.

But the Hindus as also the Parsis and Indian Christians did not stop at equipping themselves for clerkship ; they went in for higher English education ; they devoured English literature and the classics and with them imbibed western ideas of freedom, democracy and nationalism. And the Indian National Congress was born—in Bombay in 1885. The first session was attended by 77 delegates, representing all the principal communities of India, including two Muslims. The second session held in the North was attended by 440 delegates, including 33 Muslims. By 1890, the number of delegates to the annual session of the Congress had swelled to 702, which included no less than 156 Muslims.

Thus the Congress became the organ and mirror of the political aspirations of western-educated Indian intelligentsia, irrespective of caste or community. Therein were to be found Englishmen as well as Parsis, Indian Christians, Hindus and Muslims, generally in proportion to the extent of the spread of western education in their respective communities. But the Hindus, by virtue of their numerical superiority and the fact that they were quick to take to western education, naturally formed the majority in the Congress.

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

Now as the Congress started clamouring for representative government on the colonial model, the Raj viewed the Congress activity with increasing annoyance and impatience, and it looked round for measures to keep this vigorous Indian nationalism in check and within bounds. What it needed was a counterbalancing force, a counterpoise. And the Raj decided upon taking the Muslim community under its protecting wing.

The Hindus had fallen out of grace with the Raj, and hereafter the Muslim community was the favoured mistress of British imperialism in India. The services of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan were availed of gratefully. He immediately took upon himself the task of removing mutual distrust between the Muslim community and the Government. He pointed out to his community the vital connexion between the new education and government of the country, and drove home to the Muslims the blunder they had committed in refusing to move with the times. He urged them to reconsider their attitude towards the new education. He declared that modern learning was neither forbidden by the Koran nor dangerous to the faith it taught. An immediate and direct fruit of his agitation was the founding of the first Muslim college at Aligarh, which later developed into a Muslim University.

Sir Syed Ahmad's next task was to rouse political—or rather communal—consciousness in his community. And as the Congress concentrated on representative government as its goal, he pointed out to his co-religionists how that would mean condemning the Muslims of India to majority rule permanently—they who had but only recently been the governing class !

As the stage arrived for the next instalment of "reforms," pith and point was lent to Sir Syed Ahmad's advocacy. And thus the scattered forces of separatism among the Muslims for the first time rallied together in the first session of the All-India Muslim League, at Dacca, in December, 1906. The Aga Khan presided over it—the right

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

auspices to start under if it were to gain the ear of the Government.

Sure enough, the following aims and objects were announced for the new organisation :—

“(1) To promote among Indian Moslems feelings of loyalty towards the British Government, and to remove any misconception that may arise, as to the intentions of the Government with regard to any of its measures; (2) to protect the political and other rights of the Indian Moslems and to place their needs and aspirations before the Government in temperate language; (3) so far as possible, **without prejudice to the objects mentioned under (1) and (2)**, to promote friendly feelings between Muslims and other communities of India.” (black mine.)

The very first session of the League formulated the demand for separate electorate for the Muslims and declared that the Muslim community would never acquiesce in the status and position of a permanent minority and demanded that the extent of the Muslim community’s representation must be “commensurate not merely with numerical strength, but also with their political importance and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the Empire.” After this session of the League immediately followed the Muslim deputation to Lord Minto. The above quoted resolution of the League betrays a very close resemblance to the words used by Lord Minto in his reply to the address presented by the Muslim Deputation. The Viceroy’s summing up of the Muslims’ demand was so brilliant that it deserves to be quoted here :

“The pith of your address, as I understand it, is a claim that any system of representation, whether it affects a Municipality or a District Board or a Legislative Council, in which it is proposed to introduce or increase an electoral organisation, the Muslim community should be represented as a community. You point out that in many cases, electoral bodies, as now constituted, cannot be expected to return a Muslim candidate, and if by any chance they did so, it would only be at the sacrifice of such candidate’s views to those of a majority opposed to his community, whom he

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

would in no way represent; as you justly claim that your proposition should be estimated not on your numerical strength, but in respect to the political importance of the community and the services it has rendered to the Empire. I am entirely in accord with you."

The 1909 Reforms conceded the Muslim League's demands—and more: it gave them separate electorates besides the right to vote also side by side with the Hindus, and they also obtained weightage (i.e., more seats than they were entitled to by virtue of their numbers only).

That was a quick and easy victory for the Muslim League, which at once brought enormous prestige to the institution and adherents too.

Thus was also dealt the first blow to Indian nationalism and Congress. It was not so much the conceding of the Muslim League's demand of separate electorates, but the implication of the acquiescence in that demand that hurt the Congress. By this act the government had administered a direct rebuff to the Congress and rejected the credentials of the Congress as representative of the national aspirations of all India and encouraged separatism in India. Thus was sown the seed of discord in the body politic of India.

And thus began the "love triangle" of Indian politics. with the Congress and the British Government in the roles of rival suitors for the hand of the capricious Muslim League. Fully conscious of the advantages of this easy role, the Muslim League has driven the sharpest bargains now with one and now with the other; all the time keeping both on tenter-hooks of expectancy and uncertainty.

With the 1909 Act, the British Government had won over the League to the detriment of the Congress. The Congress now pressed its suit with renewed vigour and zeal. It accepted its first reverse in a spirit of realism. It had never minimised the Muslim minority question right from the beginning. The article of the constitution which allocated seats to the All-India Congress Committee prescribed that "as far as possible onefifth of the total number of representatives shall be Muslims." Another article pro-

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

vided (1) that no subject could be discussed or resolution carried in the Congress if three-fourths of the Moslem or of the Hindu delegates objected, provided that they constituted not less than one-fourth of the whole assembly and (2) that in all proposals made for the extension of Indian self-government "the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded." On the question of separate electorates, the Congress, however, yet, refused to compromise. At the session of 1913, separate electorates were again condemned.

In 1916, however,—on the eve of the next instalment of "Reforms"—the Congress even conceded the separate electorates to the Muslims—if only that fickle dame would agree to make her home in the Congress camp and give her support to the cause of national freedom!

By the Lucknow Pact of 1916, the Congress obtained the temporary support of the League for a limited objective; in other words, it had obtained a promise from the League that the latter would not obstruct the passage of the ensuing reforms.

In return for the League's support for the demand for liberalisation of the constitution, the Congress paid the heavy price of separate electorates to the Muslims. It even acquiesced in their introduction in the Punjab and the Central Provinces. Seats, moreover, on the councils were allotted to those electorates on a generous scale. In Bengal the Moslems were to obtain only threequarters of the seats to which they would have been entitled on a purely numerical basis, and in the Punjab only ninetenths; but in both these provinces this was a great increase on the extent of Moslem representation under the Morley-Minto Reforms (1909); in Bengal it was raised from 10.4 to 40 per cent, in the Punjab from 25 to 50 per cent. And in the other provinces the Moslems were to obtain many more seats than they had before or would have on a population basis; in the United Provinces and Madras, for example, 14 and 6.15 per cent. Moslem population would have a thirty and fifteen per cent representation. The Moslem strength at the centre was similarly increased by the allot-

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

ment of one-third of the elections to the council to separate Muslim constituencies.

In return, the Muslims surrendered the additional advantage they had obtained in 1909 of also voting in the general electorates—which was not really considered very much of a loss according to the Muslim League way of thinking. A final safeguard was provided by the application of the device adopted in the Congress constitution : no bill or resolution affecting a community should be proceeded with if three-fourths of the representatives of that community were opposed to it.

Here, one remarkable factor in Indian politics has to be noted. That is, that every time the Muslim League forgets and abdicates its allotted communal role and function in opposition to the Congress, a new—however temporary—organisation has arisen to fulfil that role of counterpoise and reaction against the Congress.

Thus in 1918, there came into being a body called the All-India Muslim Association behind which all reactionary forces among the Muslims rallied and denounced Mr. Jinnah —then, too, leading the Muslim League—for collaborating with the Congress. It charged Mr. Jinnah with breaking away from the decision taken by the Council of the League in 1913 and identifying himself with the Congress demand for “colonial self-government.”

But happily—and for once—reactionarism failed and for a brief period, the Congress and the Muslim League marched arm in arm. Several events, including Congress’ hard work to that end, were responsible for the rout of this reaction’s conspiracy against progressive forces. The most important was the Khilafat agitation that followed the disruption of the old Caliphate of Turkey at the end of the last war. The Congress immediately joined in the agitation, making common cause with the Muslims of India and threw itself heart and soul into it—and the first mass political movement in the country was launched under the happy joint auspices of Hindus and Muslims.

The Congress seemed at last to have succeeded in its

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

courtship of the Muslim League as against the British Government.

Before the Joint Select Committee in 1919, the Moslem delegation including Mr. Jinnah accepted the goal of swaraj in principle. But for their insistence on separate electorates for their community, the Moslem delegation's attitude at the Joint Select Committee was the same as that of Hindu Liberals. Then, the Muslim League went further and identified itself with Mahatma Gandhi's "revolutionary" policy, and it was virtually merged in the Congress.

Between 1919 and 1924 the League did not even meet as a separate body, and when it met in the spring of 1924, the League insisted as vehemently as the Congress on immediate and far reaching constitutional advance. And Government, declared Mr. Jinnah, must meet the "universal demand" (But it was a different Jinnah, then!). This League session while reiterating its faith in separate electorates, plumped for a federal type of constitution for India with complete autonomy for the provinces, "the functions of the central government being confined to such matters only as are of general and common concern." It made one proviso: that was, "any territorial redistribution that might at any time become necessary shall not in any way affect the Moslem majority of population in the Punjab, Bengal and the North-West Frontier province."

But with the establishment of the Republic in Turkey under Kemal Ataturk, the Khilafat crusade liquidated itself and the Muslims as a community gradually withdrew from the national arena to their separatist shell, from which the Congress has wooed them in vain since then.

And there was a sudden deterioration in the communal feelings. For no apparent reason, sporadic riots broke out from 1922 onwards. In Bombay labour strikes mysteriously degenerated into communal riots ; there were eleven communal riots in 1923; 18 in 1924 and 16 in 1925; 35 in 1926 and 31 upto November 1927. The death roll for these five years was 450 and at least 5,000 were injured in communal riots. The worst outbreak was in Calcutta in the spring of 1926.

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

lasting more than a fortnight. No fewer than 67 persons lost their lives and four hundred were injured.

Pained and confused though it was that all its hard work had proved futile, the Congress, nevertheless, never ceased its efforts for Hindu-Muslim unity, which continued to be the first objective on the Congress programme.

In 1928, constitutional changes were again impending ; the Simon commission had been appointed at the end of 1927, and paid its first visit to India early in 1928. And in the February of that year, the Congress took another opportunity to make a supreme effort at a communal settlement. An all-Parties Conference was convened at Delhi to consider the drafting of an Indian constitution. The conference appointed a representative committee under the chairmanship of the late Pandit Motilal Nehru, to draft a constitution for India.

This represented the first attempt ever to take the communal bull by the horns. Its three main proposals were: (1) a declaration of rights should be inserted in the constitution, assuring *inter alia* the fullest liberty of conscience and religion; (2) N.W.F. and Sind to be made separate and independent provinces; (3) but the Nehru Report firmly set its face against separate electorates and instead recommended joint electorates, with the only communal safeguard reservation of seats and this, too, should only be afforded to Muslims and not to any other community or group except the non-Muslims in the N.W.F. Nor were seats to be reserved for Muslims where they were in majority, but only at the Centre and in provinces in which they were in minority. The right to contest other than reserved seats was conceded but no weightage was to be allowed; the number of seats to be in strict proportion to the size of the community. "A minority must remain a minority whether any seats are reserved for it or not," the Nehru report pointed out.*

* This recalls the remark of the Donoughmore Report on communal electorates in Ceylon : "If the Legislature were anxious to oppress the Burghers in any way, it would not be prevented by the presence of two Burgher communal members."

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

The Congress applecart, however, was once again upset by another rally of Muslim reactionaries. On January, 1, 1929, an all-India Muslim conference met at Delhi, under the presidency of the redoubtable Aga Khan. The conference immediately repudiated and denounced the Muslim members of the Nehru Committee who had signed the report. It formulated a full scale manifesto of Muslim claims. The most significant points in the manifesto were the Muslims' determination to retain the right of representation accorded them under the Act of 1919 at any cost and the conception of a federal system of Government for India with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent States. Separate electorates were insisted upon, and the manifesto also demanded that in provinces wherein they were a minority they should have representation in no case less than that enjoyed by them under the existing law (i.e. weightage). Further it demanded safeguards for the "protection and promotion of Muslim education, language, religion, personal law and Muslim charitable institutions" (which rights the Congress had promised by the declaration of rights). The final clause of the manifesto said: "This conference emphatically declares that no constitution, by whomsoever proposed or devised, will be acceptable to Indian Mussalmans unless it conforms with the principles embodied in this resolution." This clause in advance vetoed any possible future compromise or agreement on the Muslim demands.

When this proved to be the unexpected sequel to the well-intentioned effort represented by the Nehru report, the Congress immediately scrapped the report. And at its Karachi session in 1931, the Congress adopted an exhaustive declaration of rights which laid down elaborate safeguards and guarantees to the Muslims and other minorities.

Meantime, the Simon Commission had toured India to the chorus of "Simon Go Back." In England the Labour Party came to power, and Mr. Wedgwood Benn, the Labour Secretary of State for India, called a round table conference in London to settle the Indian constitutional question.

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

The Round Table Conference, however, was so packed that the reactionary forces represented thereat overweighted the progressive forces. Princes, landlords and other loyalists were there in full force; the Congress was refused representation in proportion to its status and influence in the country, and nationalist Muslims, a considerably influential, progressive-minded group, were kept severely out of the conference.

At its Lahore session in 1929, the Congress had declared complete independence as its goal; and the following year, the Satyagraha movement was launched with the historic Dandi March by Mahatma Gandhi. With the exception of a considerable and influential group of nationalist Muslims, the Muslim community generally kept aloof from the movement this time. It even displayed hostility to it. At a session of the All-India Muslim conference held at Bombay in April, that year, Mr. Muhammad Ali, who had been Mahatma Gandhi's ally in the Khilafat days, denounced Mahatma Gandhi's policy now, from his presidential chair. He declared that while Muslims were opposed to British domination, they were equally opposed to Hindu domination. "We refuse to join Mahatma Gandhi, because his movement is not a movement for the complete independence of India, but for making the seventy millions of Indian Muslims dependents of Hindu Mahasabha."

And coincidentally enough, communal disorders broke out in Bombay, the United Provinces and Assam, and at Dacca the fighting lasted ten days.

Meanwhile, the Round Table Conference series was being staged in London. The first conference, the Congress did not attend, but it kindled great enthusiasm in the country as it revealed an unexpected unanimity on the principle of federal form of government for India; both Muslims and the Princes enthusiastically supporting the idea. But the conference soon floundered on the rock of minority claims, as it might have been expected to from the character and composition of the personnel of the conference. For the first time, at this conference, the Depressed

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Classes, led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, added their voice to the chorus of separationist claims. It was, also, at this conference that Mr. Muhammad Ali made his famous declaration (which later proved to be his swansong) : "Make no mistake about the quarrels between Hindu and Mussalman. They are founded on the fear of domination," and the Maulana pointed out to the conference that Islam was not confined to India. "I belong to two circles, which are not concentric. One is India and the other is the Muslim world. We are not nationalists but supernationalists."

Before the conference closed, the Moslem delegation as a whole made a formal statement of its position. It reiterated their claim that no advance is possible or practicable, whether in the provinces or the central government, without adequate safeguards for the Muslims of India, and that no constitution will be acceptable to the Muslims of India without such safeguards.

By the time the second Round Table Conference met, peace had been made between the Congress and the Government by the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, and the Congress returned from the wilderness and Mahatma Gandhi went to London as the sole representative of the Congress at the Round Table Conference.

In London, Gandhiji devoted his entire time to the communal question. He obtained a week's adjournment of the Minorities Committee to convene himself informal conferences with other delegates with a view to arrive at a communal settlement. It was again a case of love's labour lost. Muslim and other Indian reactionaries, blessed by their British counterparts, stuck to their pound of flesh. While Hindu reactionaries, to the delight of the British diehards, pulled in the opposite direction. And at the end of the week, Mahatma Gandhi came before the conference and reported : "It is with deep sorrow and deeper humiliation that I have to announce utter failure to secure an agreed solution of the communal question." He urged that the work of constitution building must go on without

THE ETERNAL TRIANGLE

it, and he suggested that the communal dispute might be settled by a judicial tribunal after the constitution had been completed.

The appearance of the Congress at the conference table was the signal for a rally of reactionary forces among the British and Muslim and other Indian delegates. Besides with the exit of the Labour government and Mr. Wedgwood Benn and the coming in of the "national" government and Sir Samuel Hoare as Secretary of State for India, even the atmosphere at the conference had changed. The united front of the reactionary forces set to the task of sabotaging the conference, and in the Babel of reaction, the feeble voice of progress was completely drowned.

The second R.T.C. was a clear triumph for reaction—and a defeat for the Congress.

The Communal Award that followed pandered to the diverse minorities' claims. It retained separate electorates for the minority communities and also for the Muslims in Bengal and the Punjab despite their numerical majority; weightage was also conceded to the Muslims in provinces where they were in a minority and to the Sikh and Hindu minorities in the Punjab.

A new feature was the recognition accorded to the Depressed Classes as a separate minority entitled to separate electorates; while another feature was the separate representation granted to women. The concession to the Depressed Classes, however, led to Mahatma Gandhi's "fast unto death" and the subsequent Poona Pact which annulled separate electorates to the Depressed Classes who in exchange were given larger representation all round for consenting to remain part of the Hindu community.

This is in brief a survey of the role of communalism in the constitutional evolution of India until the passing of the Government of India Act of 1935. Thrice blessed by the British Government—in 1909, in 1919 and then in 1935—communalism hereafter came boldly into the open and

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

was accepted as part of the body politic of India—it now received unqualified official recognition.

And under the able and astute leadership of Mr. Jinnah, the Muslim League adopted the "realpolitik" technique, reorganised itself and went on from strength to strength, until to-day—what with the nagging that Mr. Jinnah has submitted the British government to—the British government has reached the stage of wondering whether history would repeat itself, and that the Muslim League, too, would go the way of the Congress—will it kick off the ladder with which it climbed to influence and power ?

14. JINNAH'S BEANSTALK

THE rout of the League at the 1936 provincial elections was a shock both to the League and its British well-wishers.

The first touch of reality had brought the League down crumbling, glaringly exposing its hollow claims and revealing its weaknesses. The most damaging implication of this rout was that the League did not really represent the Muslim masses it all along claimed to represent—and the striking contrast between the performance of the League and that of the Congress was too unmistakable to be easily explained away.

Incidentally provincial autonomy was inaugurated under the right auspices. The very first elections under the enlarged suffrage had proved beyond doubt that the heart of the Indian Demos is essentially sound and in the right place: that given a fair chance, unhampered by imperialist machinations and constitutional and statutory obstacles, you could depend upon its instincts to lead the nascent Indian democracy on the right lines.

The Indian Demos had delivered a clear verdict: it would have no truck with reactionism from any direction—the Hindu Mahasabha, too, was nowhere in the picture. Even Muslim majority provinces, the Punjab, Bengal, N.W.F. and Sind, had refused to countenance communalism as a plank to fight the elections on; economic alignments divided the parties at elections—thus fulfilling the expectations of all progressive, democratic-minded, well-wishers of India.

The Congress was the only all-India party that entered the field of provincial elections—and also came out in flying colours.

The Hindu Mahasabha dared not put up its own candidates in any province. In Sind and Bengal, where the Hindu minority is strong and influential, the Hindus

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

formed their own "Hindu National Parties" with purely provincial, utilitarian programmes, or joined mixed Hindu-Muslim parties formed on the basis of economic interests.

In the Punjab, the famous Unionist Party, founded by the late Sir Fazli-Hussain, which won a majority, was composed of Muslim and Hindu landholders who had banded together to protect their common economic interests.

In Bengal, the Krishak Proja Party, a peasant and workers' organisation, scored a majority. In Sind, Sir Abdullah Haroon resigned from the League and himself ran a party of his own, the Sind United Party, and fought Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah's party. In the N.W.F., of course, the Congress had their own way.

Out of 485 reserved Muslim seats in the eleven provinces, the League could capture only 108. Not a single League candidate could return to the Assemblies of Bihar, the Central Provinces, the North-West Frontier, Orissa and Sind. The unkindest cut of all was that it was in the muslim-majority provinces of the Punjab, N.W.F., Bengal and Sind that the League suffered the most ignominious defeat.

Only in the Muslim minority provinces like the United Provinces and Bombay did the League secure comparatively substantial number of seats—and this was natural ; the Muslim League with its role of champion of the Muslim minority held greater appeal among the Muslims of the Hindu majority provinces. And, besides, Bombay was the home-province and stronghold of Mr. Jinnah.

On Mr. Jinnah the lessons of this crushing defeat at the polls were not wasted. He scientifically analysed its causes and patiently and systematically sought to remedy the defects and drawbacks. He closely studied the secret of the success of other political organisations in the world—the Congress in India, the Nazi party in Germany and the Fascist party in Italy. He freely borrowed points from them. He did not hesitate to pinch the programme of the Congress; learnt a lot from the Nazi technique and Mussolini's tactics.

JINNAH'S BEANSTALK

Mr. Jinnah realised that negative policy cannot bring home the goods, though quite handy when dealing with an ever-ready-to-oblige Government or to launch a flank attack on the Congress pre-occupied in the battle for freedom against Government. A more vital lesson that he took to heart was that with the enlarged franchise, the fate of a political party entirely depended on its influence and hold on the masses.

And this intellectual aristocrat, in the autumn of his life, was forced, by circumstances and for the sake of the health and very life of his beloved organisation, to change his ways—this aristocrat, who had, in his earlier avatar, hated the very smell of the sweating, milling rabble and quit the Congress when that organisation ceased to be “respectable” by transferring its activities from the illumined hall to the coarse, open maidan of the masses.

The 1937 session of the League adopted independence as its goal and borrowed the economic and rural uplift programme of the Congress whole-sale, including revival of cottage and indigenous industries, use of swadeshi, and Prohibition. But in seeking distinctiveness for his programme, Mr. Jinnah gave it a ludicrous twist—“Muslim swadeshi” and “Muslim cottage industries.”!

Hitler had shown how necessary it is to give the masses a peg to hang their grievances on and a scapegoat to vent their bile on! Had not Hitler in his “Mein Kampf” laid down “Hatred is more effective than dislike”? Politically, the Congress was the League’s toughest enemy—Congress principles were the very antithesis and negation of all that the League stood for; as long as the Congress was influential and powerful, it was the greatest obstacle to the League’s rise. Therefore, concentrate all energies on undermining the strength of the Congress.

Mr. Jinnah’s next need was a revitalisation or adoption of effective slogans. “Islam in Danger,” though good in itself, is not enough; and he added two more: “Congress oppression” and “Hindu domination.”

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

The German propaganda ministry worked on the theory that if you make your claims fantastic enough, you leave everyone too flabbergasted to retort. The technique worked beautifully, on occasion, and if your claim is astronomic enough, there is always the chance that you can lead neutrals into assuming that the truth is halfway between you and the other fellow !

The League campaign of hate against the Congress assimilated all these tenets of Nazi propaganda technique. Side by side the "political" education of the Muslim masses went on apace—this, in effect, meant poisoning the unsophisticated, simple, illiterate Muslim masses with the dangerous communal virus; in other words, setting every man against his neighbour.

But by the Nazi standards, a successful political organisation also requires a Mythus with an appropriate ideological facade. And Mr. Jinnah invented the Muslim Nation myth—which for a time floundered on the reefs of "Hindu and Muslim nations in every village, every town and every province"**; that was too absurd on the very face of it and therefore bad propaganda abroad. Mr. Jinnah soon realised this and rescued it and put it in the more alluring and concrete frame of Pakistan—a National Home and a National State for Muslims !

And the adoption of the Nazi technique was complete with the apotheosization of the League Fuehrer—the Qaid-e-azam—"Qaid-e-azam zindabad"—the Qaid-e-Azam can do no wrong !

Meanwhile, Mr. Jinnah assiduously, patiently and tactfully set himself to the task of roping the Muslim leaders in the Muslim-majority provinces into the League. He coaxed them, argued with them, bullied them into toeing

* "Two nations, Mr. Jinnah! Confronting each other in every province? Every town? Every village?"

"Two nations. Confronting each other in every province. Every town. Every village. That is the only solution."

"That is a very terrible solution, Mr. Jinnah!"

"It is a terrible solution. But it is the only one."

This conversation between Mr. M. A. Jinnah and Mr. Edward Thomson which took place in October, 1939, is reported in latter's book "Enlist India for Freedom"

JINNAH'S BEANSTALK

the line with the League; he threatened those who refused, with political extinction. His appeal went forth to all Muslim leaders countrywide in the name of "Muslim solidarity in face of common danger."

His initial triumph was when at the 1937 session of the League, Mr. Jinnah persuaded Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the leader of the Unionist Party and Premier of the Punjab, to sign a "non-aggression" pact with him. The terms of the pact were of reciprocal benefit; Muslim members of the Unionist party should join the League and support the League's policy in all-India matters, while Mr. Jinnah promised to keep his hands off the Punjab and its affairs, which was the Unionist Party's pigeon. But Mr. Jinnah's Trojan horse had secured entry into the Unionist fortress of the Punjab!

Mr. Jinnah paraded this pact as the League's victory and establishment of its suzerainty over the Punjab. Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, himself a loyal Muslim, saw no harm in such a parade, as long as, in practice, Mr. Jinnah kept his word not to interfere with the Punjab's affairs. Such was the working arrangement between the two leaders.

With the sudden death of Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan in December 1942, Mr. Jinnah made a determined attempt to establish full and undisputed suzerainty over the Punjab and to name the ministry, a League Ministry. At the Delhi session of the League, in April, 1943, Mr. Jinnah delivered an ultimatum to Malik Khizar Hyat Khan, the new leader of the Unionist Party and Premier of the Punjab to declare his ministry a League ministry and darkly threatened dire consequences if the Unionist party refused.

With an amusing process of casuistry, Mr. Jinnah interpreted the Jinnah-Sikandar Pact in these words: "There is not the slightest doubt that immediately the pact was signed the Unionist party in the Punjab was no more. Under that pact a Muslim League Party was to be established in the Punjab Assembly and that Party was to be subject to the control and supervision of the All-India

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Muslim League and the Provincial Muslim League. Malik Khizar Hyat Khan has formed such a party." At the League Council meeting, Malik Khizar mumbled assent to the Fuehrer's command and paid his obeisance to him. But back in the free atmosphere of Lahore, he stuck to his departed leader's principles and did nothing.

In Bengal, too, Mr. Jinnah got round the Huq-Nazimuddin coalition ministry to accept a similar arrangement, whereby he secured the allegiance of the Muslim members of the coalition party. This arrangement worked tolerably well for five years, though Mr. Fazlul Huq, that stormy petrel of Bengal politics, repeatedly found himself at loggerheads with the League Fuehrer. Finally, Mr. Huq quit the League, dissolved the ministry and formed the "Progressive Coalition" Ministry, completely independent of, even hostile to, the League.

But last April (1943), the Governor of Bengal and the European Group in the Legislature obligingly came to the rescue of the League in Bengal, and enacted a scene reminiscent of the Hacha episode of Munich memory. Sir John Herbert summoned Mr. Huq to his presence and demanded and obtained his signature to a resignation letter kept ready for him, and then, with his own hands, installed a League ministry in Bengal.

Meanwhile, in Assam, too, the League had succeeded in seeing a coalition ministry established with a Leaguer at its head.

But Sind was a tough proposition. The local rivalries and intrigues defied Mr. Jinnah's viles until a year ago—when there too, the Governor obligingly intervened, threw out the progressive Allahbux ministry on a wholly irrelevant issue and in a most autocratic and unconstitutional manner. And a League ministry was at last formed in Sind, with the help of opportunists like Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah, a renegade from the Allahbux Cabinet.

Mr. Jinnah's latest triumph is the establishment of a

JINNAH'S BEANSTALK

League coalition ministry in the North-West Frontier Province.

This is the story of Mr. Jinnah's beanstalk. Of course, circumstances were all too favourable. The powerful Congress governments in eight out of the eleven provinces had struck awe into the hearts of Whitehall ; the Congress was sitting heavily on the chest of the bureaucracy, and the latter simply could do nothing about it. At last a good opportunity arose to shake off the Congress and allow the bureaucracy to breathe freely. That opportunity was the outbreak of war.

When the Congress ministries resigned expressing dissatisfaction with the British Government's war aims, there were rejoicings and incense-burning in the temples of reaction—imperialist diehards in Whitehall and smarting bureaucrats in New Delhi heaved a sigh of relief. Hindu and Muslim reactionaries were happy. And Mr. Jinnah marked the exit of the Congress from power with the observance of the "Deliverance Day."

Under these auspices the amazing career of successes and triumphs of the League began. With the Congress away behind the bars, reaction stalks the land, and careerists and opportunists have begun to play.

However, nothing succeeds like success. In the short spell of seven years, Mr. Jinnah has converted the League from just a shelter to negative reactionaries who banded together dutifully to put obstacles in the way of the country's constitutional progress, to a powerful, dynamic body, with a positive programme—at least, on paper—and influence and hold on the Muslim masses. It has the alluring Pakistan for goal ; the intoxicating Muslim nation myth to hug to ; and it has its Qaid-e-azam to worship.

15. SOWING THE WIND

HIRTEEN years ago, the seed of Pakistan was first sown. The late Sir Mohmad Iqbal, the great Muslim poet, presided over the Lucknow session of the Muslim League in 1930 and painted a romantic picture of an independent Muslim state in India. But the sowing was far too out of season, and the seed fell on fallow and, yet, unreceptive soil. And soon after, even Sir Mohmad Iqbal recanted his proposal.

A few months later, I had occasion to meet the late Maulana Shaukat Ali, and I asked the "Big Brother" what he thought of Iqbal's proposal. Even that fanatical, militant Muslim pooh-poohed it as an impracticable and undesirable dream. And there followed an all round denunciation of the proposal from all prominent Muslims, both inside and outside the League.

Edward Thomson in his book "Enlist India for Freedom" makes this interesting revelation on the subject :

"Iqbal was a friend, and he set my misconceptions (about his Pakistan proposal) right. After speaking of his own despondency at the chaos he saw coming 'on my vast undisciplined and starving land' he went on to say that he thought the Pakistan plan would be disastrous to the British Government, disastrous to the Hindu community, disastrous to the Muslim community. 'But I am the President of the Muslim League and therefore it is my duty to support it'!"

And for some time many an Indian Muslim was almost embarrassed when one talked of Pakistan in his company.

It was, however, left to one Rehmat Ali, M.A., LL.B., a resident in England, to found the Pakistan movement three years later, in 1933. His Pakistan, however, comprised of the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Kashmir, Sind and Baluchistan only. Bengal was, yet, not in it. The proposal was timidly circulated to members of the Round

SOWING THE WIND

Table Conference then being staged in London, but never officially put forth by any Muslim group at the R. T. C. According to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar,* "It seems an attempt was made privately to obtain the consent of the British Government. They, however, declined to consider it because they imagined that this was a 'revival of the old Muslim empire.'"

Meanwhile, at the R. T. C., the Muslims accepted the democratic base for the Indian constitution, but also claimed to be a "large, historically important minority"—they had not yet, then, evolved themselves into a nation—and then tragically pinned their faith in separate electorates. Now this stand taken up by the Muslim leaders at the R. T. C., was bristling with contradictions. In a political democracy there is no place for a communal minority. And when a permanent political status is claimed for a static communal minority, it is inevitable that such minority is doomed by its own action, to be a permanent unalterable political minority which refuses to merge into a political majority. But while claiming for their community an independent political status and entity, the Muslim leaders would not accept the implications of such a stand, namely, a minority is a minority and can never be the rulers—for only the political majority can be the rulers in a political democracy. And separate electorate segregated the Muslim community in a watertight compartment, preventing its members from merging into non-communal groups convertible into political majority which could run the government of the country.

Inevitably enough, when provincial autonomy came into being under the new Government of India Act, in 1937, the Muslim leaders found themselves hoist with their own petard. Separate electorates placed the Muslims in a permanent minority in the legislatures, while the League would not allow them to join non-communal political

* "Thoughts on Pakistan" by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

parties and thus share the ministries. While those Muslims who dared to do so, were immediately denounced by the League.

In these circumstances, the futility of separate communal electorates was forcefully brought home to the Muslim communalists. They found it brought them more disadvantages than advantages. The only lesson drawn from the situation should have been that separate communal electorates defeated their own purpose and brought no protection to them. This should have induced the Muslim leaders to plump for joint electorates, with adequate protection in the shape of reservation of seats and statutory safeguards for their cultural and religious interests. But the Muslim League swung to the other extreme and decided that cutting the Gordian knot was the only solution.

Their political stand in claiming to be a minority had brought them to a dead-end—all conceivable safeguards and protection to their community they demanded and got in the Government of India Act, 1935, and yet at the end of it, the Muslim community found they were no where in the political picture of provincial autonomy in all provinces where they were in minority.

And they decided to be a nation ! Thus the seed sown nine years earlier by Iqbal, began to germinate, and the two-nations theory was born. But this proposal had its own difficulties when it came to preaching. The Muslim minorities in the Hindu majority provinces—and they were seven densely populated provinces out of the eleven—began at first to look askance at the Pakistan proposal. They, as a weak minority who needed most protection, wondered how they were going to benefit by strengthening the strong, who were capable of looking after themselves—namely the Muslims of the Muslim majority provinces. Were the Muslim minorities of the Hindu provinces going to be thrown to the wolves ? The only plausible argument to bring round these Muslim minorities to accept Pakistan

SOWING THE WIND

was the theory of communal hostages : It was pointed out to them that with a strong Muslim national state with a large Hindu minority under it, the Hindus dare not mistreat the Muslim minorities in the Hindu-stan ! And thus the vicious theory of communal hostages was set in motion.

The support of Bengal Muslims to Pakistan was won by promising them an independent sovereign Muslim state in the eastern zone.

In 1940, at Lahore—exactly ten years after Iqbal had sown the seed—the League officially adopted Pakistan as its political goal. The League resolution read :

“Geographically contiguous units demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary, that the area in which the Muslims are numerically in majority as in the north-west and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous.”

These “respective regions shall have all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.”

And then was launched a raging and tearing campaign in favour of Pakistan, and nothing could be a better fertiliser to this exotic, weak plant, than slogans like “Hindu Raj,” “Congress atrocities” and “Muslim slavery,” with the shining light of “Muslim national home and state” on the horizon. The Muslim masses were then reminded of “Our glorious Past,” and told that “Muslims ruled India for a thousand years” and “Hindus have always been a subject race.”*

One tragic feature of this Pakistan campaign has been that as it gathered momentum, it has caught the imagination of the Muslim masses while at the same time its dangerous implications scared many an intellectual Muslim leader away from it.

Dr. Syed Abdul Latif of Hyderabad, Deccan, one of the

* Mr. Jinnah's speech at Delhi session of Muslim League, 1943.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

original inventors of the Pakistan theory—who conceived of a cultural Pakistan—was soon appalled by the shape and aspect given to it by the Muslim League, and hastily disowned it and dissociated himself from the Pakistan as preached by the League. He even uttered a note of warning, characterising Pakistan as visualised by the League as suicidal. In the course of a statement to the press in August, 1942, Dr. Latif warned the League against “nursing unsophisticated Muslim masses on slogans of a brand of Pakistan, the full and numerous implications of which, I have reason to believe, he (Mr. Jinnah) and his Working Committee have neither studied nor attempted to grasp.”

Dr. Latif continued :

“The real Muslim problem does not concern so much the Muslims of those parts where they form majority and can on that account look after themselves under any constitution, as it concerns the Muslim minorities in Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, downwards to Cape Comorin, who will be rendered eternal orphans under Mr. Jinnah’s plan.....I have found Mr. Jinnah incapable of conceiving the hundred millions of Muslims in India as an indivisible entity and that we can secure all the advantages of even his Pakistan without having to labour under its inevitable disadvantages by setting the scheme against an all-India background.”

Immediately after the Lahore session of the Muslim League that passed the Pakistan resolution, nationalist-minded and independent Muslims rallied in Delhi under the presidentship of the late Mr. Allahbux of Sind—the Azad Muslim Conference, which was attended by all Muslims, individuals and groups opposed to Pakistan, expressed their unmistakable opposition to political disruption of India and to its division into separate sovereign states.

Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, a prominent member of the Muslim League Working Committee, never accepted the Muslim sovereign state theory of Pakistan, and advocated his famous “zonal scheme” for the whole of India on a federal basis.

SOWING THE WIND

Muslim leaders of the North-West Frontier Province have always been the staunchest nationalists and have unflinchingly opposed the Pakistan scheme. Even the recent victories in bye-elections in that province by the League cannot be treated as a clear verdict of the province on the issue of Pakistan.

Sind was one of the very last to form a League Ministry, but the very first to have a Pakistan resolution passed through its Legislature. But the "ersatz" League ministerial party in that province seems to be a strange band and fails to carry conviction among the orthodox Leaguers. And in the last couple of months there have been a series of resignations from the League in Sind. Sheik Abdul Majid, the pillar of Sind Provincial Muslim League, has quit the League and announced the intention of forming an Azad Muslim League.

The League Premier, Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah, had sworn against separate electorates and Pakistan until one fine morning he found himself in the League saddle—thanks to the Governor of the province. Elected by a joint Hindu and Muslim Zamindari constituency, Sir Ghulam Hussein has proved one of the greatest careerists and opportunists in Indian politics, who three years ago became a member of the Muslim League for a few days and when he found that he would not get the premiership under a League Ministry, cast off his membership of the League as he would one coat for another.

Punjab, which will be the very heart of the future Pakistan, is lukewarm in its support, notwithstanding all the efforts of Mr. Jinnah to commit the ministerial Unionist Party to League policy.

Baluchistan has hardly any political life to express its views on the Pakistan issue.

In Bengal, next in importance only to the Punjab, the League has suffered the greatest setback by virtue of the secession of Mr. Fazlul Huq and the Nawab Bahadur of Dacca and other prominent Muslim leaders from the

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

League. They have organised an Azad Muslim League in Bengal which has expressed itself in favour of the federal form of government for the whole of India. While another political Muslim organisation recently started in Bengal is the Muslim Majlis, which takes its stand in complete opposition to Pakistan and the League policy. The Majlis, which has Khan Bahadur Mohamad Jan at its head, has for its main aim the prevention of splitting India into several independent states.

But while, thus, the intellectuals among the Muslims are clearly seeing the dangerous and suicidal implications of the Pakistan scheme, the Muslim masses, who cannot understand the economic and political implications, are carried away by the sentimental appeal of the slogan.

Paradoxically enough, the greatest supporters of Pakistan scheme are to be found in the Muslim minority provinces like the United Provinces, Bombay and Madras.

Another important factor to count in the consummation of the Pakistan ideal is the powerful 46 per cent. Hindu and Sikh minority in the Punjab and Bengal. The rough, high-handed methods of the League in the prosecution of its Pakistan campaign and its refusal even to cultivate the acquiescence of these large and influential minorities have driven the latter into unqualified hostility to any Pakistan scheme.

It has never occurred to Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League that if a 25 per cent. minority in the whole of India is conceded the right of secession and self-determination and to refuse to be ruled by the majority community, the fortyeight and fortysix per cent. minorities in the Punjab and Bengal have, at least, the equal right to have a say in the vital question of changing the *status quo* to the detriment of their interests.

The nearest that Mr. Jinnah went to wooing the minorities of the Pakistani areas was when, in Novebmer, 1942, the Qaid-e-azam toured the Punjab.

About that time the gulf between Mr. Jinnah and Sir

SOWING THE WIND

Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Muslim leader and Premier of the Punjab, had been alarmingly widening. A large section of the Muslims of the Punjab under the lead of Sir Sikandar had betrayed increasing impatience with the League technique, while they had never taken kindly to Pakistan.

In the latter half of 1942, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan and his Hindu colleagues in his ministry were hammering out a solution of the communal problem on a provincial basis in the Punjab. If these attempts were to prove successful, they would have spelt the death knell of Pakistan.

Mr. Jinnah got panicky and rushed North with a view to scotching the move for communal settlement and rehabilitate the Pakistan and League cause in that province.

He held parleys with Punjab Leaguers, delivered speeches and presided over Muslim students' conference. He met Sikh leaders and tried to "sell" them the Pakistan idea. Then he delivered a homily to the Sikh and Hindu minorities of the Punjab on the difference between "nationality" and "subnationality." He claimed that the Muslims in the Punjab were a nationality, while the Sikhs and the Hindus of that province were mere "subnationalities," and as such, not entitled to self-determination.

The League Fuehrer, however, failed to carry conviction to the Sikh and Hindu minorities there. They found no difficulties in noticing the fundamental fallacy in Mr. Jinnah's argument. They cynically asked : "How are you a nationality?"

What is a nationality, anyway. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as "a race forming part of one or more political nations." The emphasis is on "race." Are the Muslims a distinct, separate race in India ? They are not. Their claim to be a nationality is solely based on religion and homeland. If religion and homeland, however, are a criterion of nationality, then, how are not the Sikhs equally entitled to claim to be a nationality ? Is not what is sauce to the goose, sauce to the gander ?

The whole argument is fallacious and absurd.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Then again, there is a difference between a nationality and a nation. If they meant the same thing, it was obviously foolish to have two different words for it! It is both impracticable and absurd to confer nationhood on every nationality. If this principle is accepted, then the scattered race of Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa must have a common nation! The English, Scottish and Welsh should separate into their respective nations! The United States of America must disperse and re-sort themselves into various nationalities, each in its turn becoming a nation! For, a nationality is "a race forming part of one or more political nations."

It is more true to refer to the various linguistic and ethnological provinces of India as nationalities than to a racially mixed religious community scattered widely from Kashmir to Cape Comorin. Thus the Maharashtrian, the Gujerati, the Sindhi, the Punjabi, the Baluchi, the Pathan, the Bengali, the Tamilian, the Andhraite, the Kannadiga and the Hindustani constitute the various nationalities that go to form the Indian nation. Each one of these provinces has a distinct culture, history, ethnological entity and compact homeland. Here, at least, are conditions that perfectly conform to the definition of "nationality".....

And the Qaid-e-Azam said : "Let there be a nation." And there was a nation !

16. THE EAST WIND

NOW, amid the din and dust of the clamour of the Pakistanis, let us, with a cool head, assess the opposition to the Separation. The entire Hindu community and the Sikh community* are opposed to it; and so are Indian Christians, Parsis, even Anglo-Indians as the pronouncements of their representative spokesmen have made clear.

But it might be pointed out that what is relevant and pertinent is the attitude of the Muslim community itself. So, let us analyse the attitude of the Muslim community itself. We have already referred to the Azad Muslims' Conference, on whose platform Muslims of various political thought mustered to express their categorical opposition to Pakistan.

The chief and the most important among the Muslims opposed to the Separation is the Jamait-ul-Ulema-Hind, which represents admittedly the most learned of Muslim divines and who are considered as authorities on Muslim theology and culture. Then, there are the Khaksars, the Ahrars of the Punjab, the Khudai Khitmadgars of the North-West Frontier Province and the Momins.

The All-India Momins' Conference, which claims to represent fortyfive million Muslims of India, has repeatedly declared its bitter opposition to Pakistan and challenged the claim of the League to represent the hundred million Muslims of India.

At the last session of the Momins' Conference held at Delhi, in April, 1943, Master Tajuddin, speaking on the subject of Pakistan, claimed that majority of Muslims—the

* Sardar Sant Singh, M.L.A. (Central) a Sikh leader, in a rejoinder to Master Tarasinh ("Tribune" of August 9, 1943) on the projected Azad Punjab Pact with the Muslims, asked : "Knowing that Muslim fanaticism has not changed, are the Sikhs to go through another ordeal of sword and fire to protect their sacred shrines in the Pakistan area?" Sardar Sant Singh then observed, "In the order of priority, our enemies are British Imperialism and Pakistanists.....The Muslim Mecca is in Arabia. The Punjab is our Mecca. We will defend this our homeland, the land made sacred by our Gurus and we shall be on the offensive even against those who plan to plunder our precious heritage."

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Momins, the Azad Muslims, the Ahrars, the Jamiat-ul-ulema-Hind, the Khaksars, the Khudai Khitmadgars and other Muslim organisations, representing eighty millions of Muslims, were against Pakistan, and "would fight tooth and nail if such a scheme ever came into force."

Having thus analysed the relative strength of the two sides to the case, now let us discuss the Pakistan scheme on its merits. There are clearly three angles from which to view it, viz., the Muslim, the Hindu and the Indian—the last term representing the nationalist-minded, politically-conscious Indian, be he Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Parsi or Christian.

Considering the subject from the point of view and interests of Muslims themselves, it is vital first to ascertain how Pakistan will affect the Muslims in the Hindu provinces—for any political agitation could have only one aim, namely, the protection and promotion of the interests of weak Muslim minorities.

It will certainly tickle the fancy and sentiment of the Muslims of Hindu provinces to know that their brethren in Islam have their own national state. But, then, so is Afghanistan, as also Iran; how will that benefit them or improve their lot? If Pakistan is carved away from India, the political position of the Muslim minorities of Hindu-stan will materially weaken. Whereas they formerly belonged to a powerful one-fourth numerical minority community, now they would be reduced to a weak minority numerically about two crores. The hostage theory may be all fine on paper, but soon they will be forgotten negligible minority. Muslims in Hindu provinces have everything to lose and nothing to gain by Pakistan.

Now as to the Muslims in the Muslim-majority provinces. While sentimental hunger for their own state will be satisfied, the economic implications of a "debtors' union" comprising such barren and debt-ridden provinces like Sind, N.-W. F. P. and Baluchistan with the essentially agricultural Punjab must be so deterring in prospect that

THE EAST WIND

the Punjabi will think twice before he asks for trouble ! As the only solvent province in the midst of bankrupt ones, the Punjab will at once be the leader and guardian of this union and therefore have to shoulder the responsibility of seeing the union going.

According to figures quoted by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his "Thoughts on Pakistan," the Pakistan territory including a reconstituted Bengal state, will have a population of 80,283,931 and a revenue of Rs. 60,56,38,326. Out of this sum, Dr. Ambedkar deducts twenty-four crores as due to Hindu-stan by Pakistan as the result of financial readjustments and deductions on the eve of separation. That leaves a revenue of 36 crores to Pakistan for a population of eighty millions as against Hindu-stan's 120 crores of rupees (96 crores plus 24 crores due from Pakistan) for a population of 200 millions.

Besides, the Punjab and the N.-W. F. P. will further lose in another direction. In normal times the army budget is about 52 crores of rupees. Over fifty per cent. of the personnel of the Indian Army being Punjabi and Pathan, the Pakistan territory will lose the benefit of this income of its people. Its own small army can never make good this substantial loss of either income or employment to a number of peasant families who have for many generations depended upon army career for their sustenance.

As to the eastern zone, it has to be assumed—as the whole scheme is delightfully vague so far as its geographical definition is concerned—that the Muslim districts of Bengal and Assam are to be pooled together into an independent state. The most controversial point will be what will be Calcutta's position ? Will it be included in the Pakistan state or left behind to Hindustan ? By virtue of its population ratio and its geographical position, Calcutta falls outside the scope of the Eastern Pakistan.

Be that as it may, this Pakistan state will roughly have a population of fifty-five to sixty million, with a revenue of

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

hardly thirtysix crores*—which will make it an economic nonentity.

Present Bengal's budgetary history has been a sequence of deficits for several years. On the eve of provincial autonomy, the Central Government and Parliament came to the province's rescue. Under the Government of India Act of 1935, Bengal was better off to the extent of Rs. 75 lakhs a year than before. In the year 1935-36, despite the grant from the central revenues of an amount equal to half the proceeds of jute export duty, the budget showed a deficit of Rs. 51-1.3 lakhs. The Niemeyer report, however, as subsequently implemented, gave a further sum of Rs. 42 lakhs annually as an increased share in jute export duty and also an annual relief of Rs. 33 lakhs by cancelling the province's accumulated debt to the centre. Thus Bengal was at last able to face the future with more confidence. The budget for the year 1937-38 was a surplus budget. The year 1938-39, however, marked the beginning of another sequence of deficit budgets. The budget for 1941-42 revealed a deficit estimated at more than a crore of rupees. "Although the finances of the province, as revealed in the revised estimates and actuals of the preceding years show a continuous improvement, the expenditure of the province appears to have reached a stage where it may be said that the Government are living a little beyond its means."†

Imagine the fate of Bengal in the present war and acute food crisis. Imagine an isolated, independent, uneconomic, little state of Bengal defending herself all on her own against a foe like Japan ! Imagine a Bengal cut off from her resources from all-India, fighting the present calamity of famine !

The terrible lessons of the present sufferings of Bengal, at any rate, must put an effective lid on the Pakistan agitation in that province. One could hardly find a more convincing case made out against the vivisection of India

* The figure 36 crores of rupees is taken from "Thoughts on Pakistan" by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

† Latest budgetary figures available.

THE EAST WIND

than the present predicament of famine-stricken Bengal—never was the economic interdependence of the various provinces of India more clearly demonstrated.

This is the moral driven home by an impartial, disinterested American, Charles Behre, Professor of Geology at the Columbia University. In a well-reasoned article in an issue of the "Foreign Affairs Quarterly," the American Professor emphasises the inextricable interdependence of the Hindu and Muslim areas of India. He warns the Pakistani Muslims that "If India is divided on the basis of religious population, the Hindu state would be rich and the Muslim state conspicuously poor . . . speaking generally, about 90 per cent. of India's coal and 92 per cent. of iron would belong to Hindustan. Hindustan would have most ferro-alloy and subsidiary mineral," while Pakistan will possess only oil reserves and then Muslim Bengal's industry is almost certainly doomed to fatal shrinkage.

The Professor points out, "A united India would be in a position to command the sympathy and confidence of other governments and could ask for loans under international auspices on some such terms as those for which China will ask, but an India, and yet more two Indias, using the newly won sovereignty to erect tariff walls around the national borders, would be poor and an economic risk. It is possible that the investors would demand gamblers' percentage."

Professor Behre concludes, "Divided into economic fragments, India would find the unavoidable issue doubly painful of solution. In united India the problem would seem to be one urging the country to a higher degree of social consciousness which her friends within and without would wish . . . Political inter-dependence is the widest solution where economic inter-dependence is so intimate and essential."

The only viewpoint from which Pakistan may be acceptable is perhaps the communalist, reactionary Hindu's.

* "Times of India Year Book", 1942-43, Chapter on Bengal.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Once reconciled to excluding the geographical territory of Pakistan from his conception of Hindustan, the communalist Hindu should welcome such "good riddance"—and that would leave the Hindus all-powerful in major part of the country, with their rights none to dispute and with "a thorn on the side" removed once for all! Financially, he should consider himself the better and happier for it, getting rid of such liabilities as Sind, N.-W. F. and Baluchistan. "The Pakistan provinces are a drain on the provinces of Hindustan," writes Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in "Thoughts on Pakistan." "Not only do they contribute very little to the Central Government, but they receive a great deal from the Government." He points out that out of the Central Government's revenue of Rs. 121 crores, Rs. 25 crores is annually spent on the army (these are all pre-war figures), and the bulk of this army budget is spent on Pakistan territory. "Now the bulk of this amount is contributed by the Hindu provinces and is spent on an army from which the Hindus, who pay for it, are excluded."

To the Indian nationalist—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsi and Christian—however, Pakistan is an outrage to his sentiment, a criminal assault on his motherland, a deadly blow to his patriotism and a violence to all that he has learnt and cherished in international political thought and trend.

To him Pakistan represents retrogression ; putting the clock back ; undoing with one stroke the splendid work of British rule of 150 years in giving the bond of political unity to this country. He knows that economically, culturally and geographically India has been one and for thousands of years has been known as such to the outside world. And "Divine Providence" had now given the finishing touch to the attainment of India's nationhood by supplying the political and administrative unity to her.

He has watched the tragedy of uneconomic, untenable small states of post-Versailles, Balkanised Europe ; he has drawn lessons from it for his own country ; he has studied the present trend of progressive world political thought

THE EAST WIND

which tends towards larger and larger unions culminating in a world federation; he has noted the benefits and advantages conferred by such large federations as the United States of America and the Soviet Union. He simply cannot countenance at this hour of the day a deliberate and cold-blooded vivisection of the Indian nation.

The periodic visitation of war in Europe is but like the eruption of ulcers in the diseased body of the uneconomic, multi-state Europe. Nature, history and economics had meant Europe to be one, whole economic unit, but man chose to vivisect it into numerous, uneconomic tiny states, and called them nations. For that "original sin," the European has been paying the terrible penalty of war every decade or two. Napoleon and Hitler are but the instruments and mere phases of the historical forces—"historic necessity" as the Marxists would term it—that irresistibly drive towards attainment of the inevitable economic unity of Europe.

On each such occasion, however, the united front of the separatist forces in Europe has triumphed and frustrated the attempt.

As it is, whether they are individually, politically independent or not, economically the various European states are absolutely interdependent. And in the ultimate analysis, it is this economic dependence and the consequent frustration that drives these nations to covet their neighbours' property and commit aggression on them—it is essentially the urge to attain economic balance.

Europe minus Russia is just as big as India and as essentially a single economic unit and therefore calls for a single common economy for the whole of it, if peace is to endure and war is not to recur in another twenty years.

Small nation-states in the "horse-and-buggy" civilisation, perhaps, may have found justification. But, today, they are absurd anachronisms, nay, positive evils, when distance has been annihilated by the wireless and the aeroplane, and the whole world has shrunk into so to say a

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

handful and been enveloped into a meshwork of international economic chains.

Because this terrible lesson was lost upon the Versailles men, another armageddon has been necessary today. If Europe is not going to be a united states of Europe at the end of this war, as sure as night follows day, there will be another war to reap for the next generation.

Dare we shut our eyes to this frightful lesson ?

Once the tragic process of cutting up India into independent states is allowed to start, where do we draw the line ? Once you allow rein to disruptionism, you do not know where it will end. North-Western Pakistan, Eastern Pakistan and Hindustan—this is only the nucleus from which disruption of India will start. What about the Indian States ? They will find every righteous pretext to split off into independent States. One writer* visualises as many as twelve independent states in India : Hindustan, North-Western Pakistan, Eastern Pakistan, Hyderabad, Kashmir, Mysore, Baroda, the North-West Confederacy, Rajputana, the Northern Confederacy, the Central Confederacy, the Eastern Confederacy.

Twelve nations existing side by side, each with its own little army, tariff walls, frontiers, border disputes, jealousies and intrigues—what a horrifying picture of India !

Yet, this is what we, Indians, are in for, once we concede Pakistan—such are the implications of Pakistan.

Today, when post-war reconstruction plans are studied with a view to fashion a new world of economic harmony, a world federation, a commonwealth of nations ; when even the Arab states of the Middle East are seriously discussing the formation of a federation among themselves ; when the fate of small weak nation-states has been demonstrated before our eyes, India shall not shut her eyes and swim against the current and go to pieces. It would be a tragedy and a crime for which the future generations of Indians will never forgive the present, responsible for it.

* "How to Secure Indian Independence" by 'Sutlej' (Oxford University Press).

THE EAST WIND

I happened to visit war-scarred, starving Ceylon of 1942 ; it was a new, sadder, but wiser Ceylon, starved for rice, starved for clothing, starved for every necessity of life and fearing invasion any moment. I was pleasantly surprised to find that war conditions had brought to the Ceylonese a new sense of values and appreciation of his relations to his neighbouring countries and the world. I met ministers, politicians, high government officials and businessmen. Most of them freely expressed their conviction that a small country like Ceylon cannot stand by herself but must, for her own sake, cast her lot with a federal Indian union. With the Japanese round the corner, the Ceylonese clearly saw the only two alternatives before his country were : to be a perpetual pawn of rival imperialisms, if she chose to stand by herself ; or voluntarily join an Indian federation and thus derive strength and resource from such a large and strong federation. The greatest lesson that Ceylon has learnt out of this war is her complete economic dependence on India, and that lesson can never be forgotten by her.

One prominent Ceylonese politician—a Minister—made to me this significant observation : “India and Ceylon are interdependent.—India’s dependence on Ceylon is strategic ; Ceylon’s on India economic. An independent India of the future cannot afford to allow Ceylon to remain in the hands of any other power, as Ceylon in anybody else’s hands is a direct menace to India. Fate and nature have willed that we shall be part of India; if that is so, we would rather voluntarily, freely and cheerfully join an Indian federation whereby we stand to gain everything and lose nothing.” He, of course, added one proviso ; “Ceylon’s individuality shall not be impaired or encroached upon; there must be adequate safeguards against the tendency of ‘Indianisation’ of Ceylon at the expense of the Ceylonese.”

I winked and replied to him : “Haven’t we had enough trouble that we should ask for one more ? No, thanks !”

17. LINCOLN'S CHOICE

WHEN the Congress comes back from exile—may be another three years—it will be faced with a radically different and new situation. The League, which profited by the long absence of the Congress from the Indian political stage, will claim sanctions for its demand of Pakistan by virtue of its recent successes and conquests. And, of course, it will be the Shylock-like demand for "My Pound of Pakistan,"—there will be no room for negotiation or compromise, no halfway house—"You pay us the ransom of Pakistan or we will stand in your way and won't budge."

What will be the attitude of the Congress then? Will the Congress resume the tragic process of "appeasement"? Obviously the Congress is at the end of its "appeasement" tether—unless it strains that rope and hangs itself by it. Mahatma Gandhi in his historic speech at the A. I. C. C. meeting in August, 1942, indicated that the Congress had conceded all it could, and could give nothing more, as more, it was not in its hands to give.

"The Congress has agreed to submitting all differences to an impartial international tribunal and to abide by its decisions," said Gandhiji. "If even this fairest of proposals are unacceptable, the only course that remains open is that of the sword, of violence. How can I persuade myself to agree to an impossibility? To demand the vivisection of a living organism is to ask for its very life. It is a call to war." Gandhiji declared, "You may take it from me that whatever in your demand for Pakistan accords with considerations of justice and equity is lying in your pocket; whatever in the demand is contrary to justice and equity, you can take only by the sword and in no other manner."

Grim words these, wrung out of heart's agony.

If this is the last word on Congress attitude towards Pakistan, and if the League sticks to its uncompromising

stand on the issue, then any British-sponsored constitution-making body visualised in the Cripps proposals at the end of the war will serve no useful purpose. Quite at the outset it will wreck on the issue of Pakistan. Then, the only alternative—and logical—course open to the Congress is to continue the struggle alone to wrest freedom from the British—in spite of and in the face of hostility of the League. But that is a very hard, tedious and long way. For, nearer the Congress approaches its cherished goal, inevitably greater and intenser will be the opposition and hostility of the League to the Congress.

And will that really mean civil war? That, at any rate, is the threat underlying the League demands that induces the Congress and other parties to "appease" the League. The same was the psychology behind the "appeasement" of Hitler in Europe. The greatest criticism of Chamberlain's policy was not that he did not go to war against Hitler earlier but that he did not put his foot down firmly and call Hitler's bluff. If at Berchtesgaden and Munich, instead of gently "appeasing" Hitler, Chamberlain had bluntly and clearly told him that Britain and France would stand no nonsense from him, there would never have been any war now. The Municheers bred Hitler on the diet of "something for nothing"—that was their crime. That is a diet that instead of satisfying hunger, increases the appetite for more. That is also the diet that Mr. Jinnah and the League have been fed on in the past.

Men who go to war for their convictions are made of a different stuff, and Mr. Jinnah and his cohorts of the League are certainly not made of that stuff. A class which has solely depended upon the tongue to fight its battles is psychologically incapable of revolution and war. Mr. Jinnah's mental make-up is essentially that of a constitutionalist and a lawyer who is at his best at parliamentary debate and hall oratory; but most awkward in the midst of a mob and a fish out of water in a council of war. It is too dangerous a place to go in, it might spoil the crease of one's pants! The

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Nawabs, Zamindars, Knights and job-hunting higher middle classes that at present comprise the League leadership, must always hang on to the coat-tails of their protectors and foster-fathers, the British Government. They will still depend upon Whitehall to achieve their ends in preference to more drastic methods whose very contemplation makes them tremble—meanwhile, hard words break no bones !

It is one thing to incite the mob to communal fury. But it is quite another to shoulder the responsibility of deliberately and calculatedly leading a people to war—and a civil war, at that. Statesmen of sterner stuff have quailed before such a responsibility.

A study of the evolution of the Congress, and the class of people that has manned its leadership at various stages in that evolution will be instructive here. Starting as an humble, petitioning, loyalist body, the Congress grew to be a fearless, constitutionalist agitator ; then a semi-revolutionary body fighting its battles with the weapon of non-violent mass movements ; and today, it may be said to have reached the revolutionary stage—when it is even learning to go underground to keep itself alive. And throughout its journey along these four stages, it has been continuously going through the process of shedding its worn-out outdated skins — Bepin Chandra Pals and Surendranath Bannerjees, then Chintamanis and Setalvads, Jinnahs and Jayakars, and even Rajagopalachariars. Thus it has been unconsciously readjusting its leadership to the new requirements as they rose.

The Muslim League has just emerged from its infancy of hugging the apron-strings of the rulers, into the stage of fearless constitutional agitation—though its antics have a striking resemblance to those of the Nazi party of the pre-1932 days in Germany ! The League has yet far to go to reach the revolutionary stage ; and when that happens the Jinnahs, Nazimuddins and Nawabs will not be there.

Appeasement feeds on itself. There can be only two reasons for which “appeasement” of the League can be

LINCOLN'S CHOICE

justified—to avoid civil war and to enlist the League to the common cause of freedom. But a moment's cool and unpanicky thought would show that these very two objects will be defeated.

A separate independent state wrenched out of a single, economic, geographical and historical unit—a unit forged by three-thousand years of culture and sentiment—against the wishes of a large and influential section of the population, will start with a legacy of illwill spread over the entire country, besides driving forty per cent of the population of the new state into sullen discontent. This discontent is bound to find expression in acts and incidents which will call for suppression by government. And the discontented large minority—these will now be “nationals of another country”—will inevitably look to the parent Hindustan for help, resulting in agitations and counter-agitations in the two territories—which will now be two nations!

The League has made no secret of its idea of holding the Hindu population of Pakistan as hostages against the good treatment of Muslims in Hindustan—here is the microbe of trouble. Reprisals and recriminations will follow; these will manifest themselves in border “incidents” degenerating into full-dress war between Pakistan and Hindustan.

Meanwhile, all that you would have achieved by granting Pakistan would be giving concrete shape to their conceptions of narrow nationalism and a justification for a patriotism for which people will righteously be prepared to shed their blood and the blood of their one-time brethren who will now be “enemy.”

An economically poor Pakistan will present a potential cause for going to war—the cause that created Hitler in vanquished and shorn post-Versailles Germany—the bankruptcy of the new sovereign state which looks for economic elbow-room across the border—the *lebensraum* for which Hitler has started the present war.

Nor can you succeed in enlisting the Muslims to the

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

common fight for freedom—as it will cease to be common freedom. All common ties broken once for all, the Pakistanis will begin to think of themselves apart, with different values.

Pakistan means political disintegration and dismemberment of India. It means chaos and anarchy.....it is putting the hands of the clock back.....going three hundred years backwards.....it will render futile the work of a hundred and fifty years of unifying India.....it will amount to throwing away by the present foolish generation what was bequeathed to us by wise statesmanship and Providence in the past 150 years.....other nations will laugh at us.....the world will have contempt for usand the accusations that we are unfit for nationhood and independence will be demonstrated and confirmed by our own hand.

And the world will say, with some justification : “The British laboured for 150 years to make that wretched sub-continent into a united, great nation, and by one foolish act of their own, the Indians have torn to tatters all that noble work.....Yes, the British were right, these Indians are unfit for nationhood and self-government.”

18. BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

SELF-DETERMINATION, rightly understood, can and must mean the widest scope and greatest opportunities for a social unit to evolve itself to the fullest, and the removal of impediments to such evolution.

We have a right to interpret the Muslim League's demand for self-determination as a legitimate desire for such widest scope and greatest opportunities for the Muslim community of India to evolve itself to the fullest without any impediments in its way.

If there is a device by which the Muslims can be granted such a self-determination within the ambit of the Indian union, then the Muslim League cannot morally refuse to acquiesce in it. If the Muslim League did, then the world would rightly charge the League with the wanton sadistic motive of political disruption of India.

What is, in essence, the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan? It can be summed up in two phrases—to *preserve* and to *prevent*. Running through all League resolutions and statements and speeches of Mr. Jinnah and other Leaguers is a genuine anxiety that the Muslims of India may be overwhelmed, culturally and politically, by the Hindu majority. In other words, they want to *preserve* their individuality as a religious and cultural entity; and they want to *prevent* "Hindu majority rule" over the Muslims.

Now what is the essence of the Congress objection to Pakistan as proposed by the Muslim League? The Congress has already conceded the right of self-determination to the Muslims by its Delhi resolution on the Cripps proposals, so as to enable them to protect all their legitimate cultural, religious and even political interests. But what the Congress is averse to is the splitting up of India into several sovereign states.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

It is my belief that these apparently divergent points of view can be reconciled.

The Pakistan scheme, as propounded by the League, tacitly and in an unqualified manner accepts—nay, advocates—the principle of majority rule in Pakistan and Hindustan. Ergo, that scheme agrees to accord only the minority status to Hindus in Muslim majority provinces. *Ipsa facto*, the Muslim League must acquiesce in the same minority status accorded to Muslims in Hindu provinces. In other words, the minorities, be they in Pakistan or Hindustan, shall enjoy only the recognised rights of minorities under the International Convention : they shall have adequate safeguards to protect their special interests and for the rest, they must depend upon the goodwill of the majority community.

This, to my mind, is a great improvement—so far as it facilitates an all-India solution of the vexed problem—over the former stand of the Muslim League: now the Muslims are no more the “dominant” minority that claimed equal rights with the majority community willy-nilly; they are a nation—but only so far as they are located in the Pakistan area.

Thus the acceptance of minority status for the Muslims in Hindu provinces by the League, implicit in their Pakistan scheme, improves the prospects of a settlement. For, it narrows down the League’s aim to *prevent* “Hindu majority rule” at the Centre.

Here is a tentative scheme of federation in rough outline, that, in my opinion, should satisfy the ambitions and requirements of both the League and the Congress, without compromising the essence of their respective demands :—

- (1) The Constitution shall be Federal.
- (2) Provinces : Full and complete autonomy to federating units with maximum possible functions allotted to the provinces and with residuary powers vested in the provinces. But no right to secede.

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

(3) Federal Centre : The Centre shall be allotted only the minimum essential functions of exclusively all-India character, viz., (a) foreign relations, (b) defence, (c) development of industries, (d) communications, (e) customs, (f) currency, (g) credit and (h) income tax.

(4) The Federal legislature shall be constituted on the basis of Pakistan and Hindustan, with equal representation to the two "stans" in the legislature.

(5) Elections to the Federal legislature shall be by the method of joint electorates.

(6) For the purposes of this scheme, Pakistan shall mean the "north-western zones" and "eastern zone" as defined by the Pakistan scheme adumbrated in the Muslim League Lahore resolution of 1940.

(7) The head of the State (President or Prime Minister) shall be representative of Hindustan and Pakistan by rotation, with a five-year term of office, and he shall choose the cabinet.

(8) The cabinet shall necessarily be a coalition in the earlier stages of its working, as the groupings in the legislature will yet be fluid, or too small or too many. But with the environment provided by joint electorates and as the result of the impact of world political thought and day to day events and circumstances, it is inevitable that ultimately parties in the legislature should tend to be fewer and larger and to divide on fundamental economic lines prompted by their economic interests, such as peasants, workers, rural interests as represented by landlords and urban industrial interests.

(9) A Federal services recruitment Board and a jointly agreed communal ratio to guide recruiting to the all-India services with a view to correct communal or territorial under-representation.

(10) A Supreme Federal Court, consisting of three judges, one Hindu, one Muslim, and one Indian (i.e., non-Hindu and non-Muslim Indian), as the guardian and watchdog of constitution, federal and provincial.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

To avoid further complications, the Federation shall start with and confine itself to British India.

The twin guiding motives in the above scheme, it must be recognised, are to strive for the greatest common measure of agreement on an all-India basis that would make an agreement possible on the vexed politico-communal question, and thereby hasten the country's freedom. The only test of any constitutional scheme is that it shall not compromise the fundamental interests of the respective parties to the dispute. I claim that this scheme does not compromise such fundamental interests and principles. But it must be recognised that any such greatest common measure must involve certain sacrifices all round, and if those sacrifices are not of a fundamental nature, nobody has a right to refuse them, in the interests of the noble and essential cause in whose behalf they are called for.

Now discussing the details of the scheme, the provincial part of it presents no difficulty, and is easily readjustable, once the principle of majority rule in the provinces and absolute minority status to Hindu and Muslim minorities in their respective territories is accepted.

Elucidation is called for only in regard to the Federal part of the scheme. Taking the federal functions first, as enumerated in clause (3), these functions are essentially of an all-India character and do not step on communal or territorial corns. They affect or benefit all the provinces alike. On the other hand, it is to the individual interests of the provinces as well as India as a whole that these functions should be performed by an all-embracing, strong body like the Federal Centre.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the united voice of Federated India will carry more weight in international counsels and with her neighbours than the feeble Babel of several sovereign independent States in India. In recent European history we find instances of traditionally independent small sovereign states feeling the vital need of

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

voluntarily banding together to speak with one strong voice on foreign affairs. One such striking example is the Little Entente of the Succession States of post-Versailles Europe. Then, we have also seen customs unions of contiguous states.

Then, a defence force on the large federal scale must, indeed, contribute to the strength and security of the federating units as against small, ineffective armies maintained by each of the small states.

Similarly the handling of communications by the federal centre with an all-India perspective and plan, as well as customs, currency and credit it admittedly in the best interests of all the provinces alike.

On the same grounds the general planning of industrial development of India as a whole should be in the hands of the federal centre.

The allocation of income-tax to the centre will perhaps be felt necessary to finance the federal administration.

As regards the composition of the army—which is one of the subjects likely to raise a controversy—let me point out that the Indian army is already largely drawn from the Pakistan area (I mean the north-western zone from where fifty per cent of the Indian army is recruited), and it is only fair that the Muslim League should have no objection to a readjustment of the composition of the Army, allowing for a more equitable representation to other territories (including the eastern zone of Pakistan, Bengal, whose representation in the defence forces of the country is practically nil) so as to make the federal army of India representative of the whole country. But it will be to the paramount and vital interest of all the federating communities or territorial units not to impair the efficiency of the defence of the country, and therefore none dare radically to tinker with the composition of the army. Hence the privileged position enjoyed by the martial race by virtue of their war experience and soldiering tradition must generally remain intact.

As to the other thorny question of recruitment to the

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

all-India services, clause (9) should satisfy the Muslims as it makes effective provision against communal injustice.

The foregoing paragraphs make it apparent that in the discharge of these essentially all-India functions, there is absolutely no legitimate room for the interplay of communal or sectional interests; that the federal functions are purely national. Therefore it is meaningless to talk in terms of Hindu and Muslim in so far as federal legislation and administration are concerned.

The only concern and anxiety at the federal centre should and will be an efficient and smooth-working machinery to discharge these all-India functions.

Having accepted the proposition that the Centre stands for the interests and functions of the Indian nation as a whole, nobody can show any justification to reject clause (4), namely the constitution of the federal legislature on the fifty-fifty Pakistan-Hindustan basis, accompanied as it is by clause (5), viz., elections by joint electorates. At any rate, it will not lie in the mouth of Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League to oppose it after having already in recent past advocated the fifty-fifty share in the government at the centre and defined Pakistan as a Muslim state.

And with joint electorates as the method of election, neither the Congress nor the Hindus can object to dividing the representation in the federal legislature equally between Hindustan and Pakistan—mind you, Hindustan and Pakistan, and not Hindus and Muslims. Joint electorates throw open the doors of the federal legislature to representative of all communities on their merits, thus making it possible for Muslims in Hindustan and Hindus in Pakistan territories to be returned to the federal legislature. In other words, under joint electorates, the federal legislature will attract the best talents in the country, irrespective of community, caste and creed, and foster an all-India nationalist outlook among Indian public men and politicians.

Clause (7) viz., that the head of the state shall be a representative of Hindustan and Pakistan in rotation, is in

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

keeping with the spirit of clauses (4) and (5).

Clause (8) is self-explanatory. The only thing that can be added is that in the earlier stages, the federal cabinet must necessarily be composite, generally reflecting the fifty-fifty basis adumbrated in the scheme.

The Supreme Federal Court as the guardian of the constitution at the centre and the provinces, in Clause (10), should do the rest in preserving the Indian nation as well as the territorial integrity and communal interests of the provinces.

I am conscious that in making the fifty-fifty proposal for the federal government, I am asking the Hindu majority to make yet another sacrifice in the cause of India's freedom, Hindu-Muslim unity and the preservation of India as a single political and economic unit and a nation. For the achievement of these three noble objects, I believe, the sacrifice is worth it. Besides, the position will not be as alarming as it appears at first sight. The composition of the federal legislature is not really communal but only territorial, and the provision of joint electorates is a good guarantee that it shall not degenerate into communalism.

As for the Hindu communalist, but for the fact that such a proposal amounts to his acquiescence to a principle (Pakistan) to which he has a sentimental objection, there is no material reason why he should grouse, as his communal interests as such will be safe in the hands of the "Hindu Raj" in the Hindustan provinces—and these communal interests and proclivities can find scope for play only in the provinces in the very nature of things. The communalist will be a complete misfit in the federal legislature.

This scheme, at any rate, should be acceptable to the Congress, if the professions and statements of its spokesmen are any indication. The reasons why this should be acceptable to Congressmen have already been capitulated at the beginning of this chapter. Suffice it for me here to remark that Congress patriots would not surely attach any

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

fetishistic importance to mere counting of heads, when the proposal satisfies the Congress on fundamentals without compromising their principles and convictions—freedom of the country, Hindu-Muslim unity and preservation of the national integrity of India. Granted this, the ensuring of an efficient and smooth-working federal administrative machinery that will preserve and foster an all-India, nationalist policy, should be the main concern and anxiety of every Indian patriot.

The only apparent drawback in this scheme is that, viewed from the viewpoint of mere counting of heads, the representation for the Hindustan territory will be disproportionately low in reference to its population. Now, with the federal functions being what they are as enumerated above, there is clearly no question of particular interests of Hindustan area as such going by default by a slight under-representation in the federal legislature. After all, the only test of political representation in a government machinery is its effect on its constituents. Applying this test, let me put this question to the citizen of Hindustan territory : “How are your affairs or interests adversely affected by your holding a few less seats at the centre constituted in this way than you would be entitled to by virtue of your population ?” Conflict of interests, communal or territorial, will and can arise only in the provincial sphere ; and in that sphere the Hindus have adequate representation.

The language question, too, will be automatically solved by such a provincial realignment, as the majority communites in their respective territories will be free to have any language they choose—in effect, whichever language is practicable and convenient. The language at the Centre could be either Urdu for Urdu speaking representatives or Hindi for Hindi speaking representatives.

Now a word about minority rights. Under the international convention adopted at the League of Nations, the safeguards recognised for minorities are mainly in the nature of adequate provision for facilities for their education in

BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

their chosen way and protection to their religious and cultural interests. These plus any other safeguards peculiar to Indian conditions may embody roughly the safeguards to minorities in Hindustan and Pakistan respectively.

I have deliberately left details of the composition of the federating units untouched, as in a scheme of this kind, it is immaterial whether the provinces comprising the north-western zone, namely, the Punjab, N.-W. F., Sind and Baluchistan, choose to band themselves together or remain apart—at any rate, it is their business.

This supreme gesture on the part of Hindu India must evoke a right and generous response from Muslim India. And such a magnanimous give-and-take should be the happiest augury and best atmosphere for the launching of a strong and united federal India.

But, if even this does not satisfy the Muslims, then God help this country of ours. For, more than this, it is neither in the hands of the Congress nor those of the Hindu Mahasabha to give. To paraphrase Mahatma Gandhi's words of his historic August speech, "What is right and just in Pakistan, will be theirs by this plan. But what is not right and just, can be taken only by the sword. When that happens, the Congress will be extinct—that "goose that lays the golden egg,"—again in Gandhiji's words. And the equally fanatical Hindu Mahasabha will be the party that the Muslim League will have to deal with."

Whoever takes up the sword for the arbitrament of disputes, has a terrible responsibility—Hitler did it, and Hitler today is the most hated man in the world—and history will record that Hitler will also be the most hated man in his own country, when his country looks back and sighs at the needless bloodshed and human sacrifice for which he was solely responsible.

But you will not even be allowed to fight it out; for as long as the Hindus and Muslims remain divided, the British will stay in India and will not give them a chance to fight the issue out.

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

Meanwhile, if there are any illusions in some quarters that communal riots are the equivalent of "fighting it out," they are tragically mistaken. Every communal riot provoked, every bellicose speech of a Muslim Leaguer, every aggressive act of communalist Muslim will produce its counterpart in the Hindu communalist ; it will stiffen Hindu resistance to Pakistan and Muslims in general ; mutual hatred and enmity will be indelibly written in blood . . . and, then, the Congress, the only moderating, sobering influence of wisdom, will be shorn of its strength and be helpless. And the Hindu Mahasabha—whose history and growth bear testimony to this statement—will grow from strength to strength. Then, there will be no more room for a negotiated settlement or agreement . . . Already nothing has contributed more to the mobilisation of the Hindus behind the Hindu Mahasabha than the Muslim League's unreasonableness, intransigence and aggressive tactics.

For heaven's sake, again in the poignant words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Don't kill this goose that lays the golden eggs"—and don't burn the bridges !

EPILOGUE: LEAGUE CANUTE

SHALL I be accused of self-delusion if I hug to the thought that notwithstanding all the efforts of the League leaders to stem the tide of progress, world forces are irresistibly driving the Muslims out of their shells into the spacious hall of broad-based Indian nationalism.

As education spreads wider and deeper and the middle class intelligentsia in the community grows in numbers and influence, the Muslims will refuse to be mis-led and will assert themselves. There can be no doubt about that.

Common sufferings arising from war, famine and floods and threat of enemy invasion at home, and demonstrated identity of interests of Indians abroad, either in next-door Ceylon or in distant South Africa, are bringing the Muslims and Hindus together as nothing has in the past.

While he imbibes lessons from the vigorous nationalism of Turkey, Egypt and other Islamic countries of the Middle East, the Indian Muslim must also realise that his pan-Islamism is an anachronism in the present-day world. Nationalist Turkey and Chinese Muslims* have indicated their disapproval of the reactionary attitude of the spokesmen of Indian Muslims towards Indian nationalism; while even Arab nations of the Middle East look askance at the Indian Muslims' pan-Islamism.

The Muslim League leaders positively disapproved of the statement when M. Atay, the leader of the Turkish press mission to India, in a press interview in Lahore on January 28, 1943, stated, "We are Turks first, Muslims afterwards. Religion is an honourable institution but it is individual and personal and has no place in the politics of our country."

The trend of thought within the Muslim League itself is significant. The adoption of complete independence as the goal and the unmistakable impatience displayed by the ever-increasing Leftist forces within the League itself to

* One of the outstanding exponents of things Islamic in China is Mr. Ali Yang Ching-Chih. On September 5, he contributed an article to the "Ta Rung Pao," on "Islam in India." With dulcet candour he called "Pakistan" a medieval geographical expression and Jinnah the protege and scapegoat of those of the British Government who believe in keeping India divided.—

—Mr. John Kin in "Asia" (see also footnote to page 18).

THE HOUSE THAT JINNAH BUILT

fight for political freedom by more vigorous methods than mere speeches are the straw in the wind.

The greatest service that Mr. Jinnah has rendered to the Muslims is to wrest control of the League from the hands of flunkeys and toadies of British imperialism and transform the League into a vigorous, independent fighting organisation. The British government's comfort at the suppression of nationalist forces in India has not been unqualified, as it has watched with misgivings the hostile and imponderable attitude of its erstwhile active ally, the Muslim League. Under Mr. Jinnah, the League is out to exploit to the utmost the advantageous position in which the Government itself has placed the League for its own ulterior purposes. And in doing so, Mr. Jinnah is not disposed to acknowledge any gratitude to the Government for its past services to the League. Mr. Jinnah is out to drive the hardest bargain for his community with the Government as well as the Congress. He has taken all that Government has given, but has not even been grateful in return !

What is most heartening is that the cream of Muslim intelligentsia and youth gravitates to progressive forces in the country, towards nationalism, socialism and Congress. A very considerable proportion of members of the Communist Party of India and the Congress Socialist Party are Muslims and they are the best type of intellectual Muslim that you can find in India or elsewhere. Meantime, the Congress itself is going "left" at a very fast pace, and old-fashioned politicians are finding it increasingly uncomfortable to remain in the Congress.

Therefore, we cannot but be persuaded that we have no right to despair for the future of Indian nationalism and India. Reactionarism in the guise of Muslim or Hindu communalism must lose whatever little appeal it holds no sooner the main prop on which it rests, British imperialism, goes. That day, one cannot help feeling, is not far off.

